POPULAR ASPECTS OF ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

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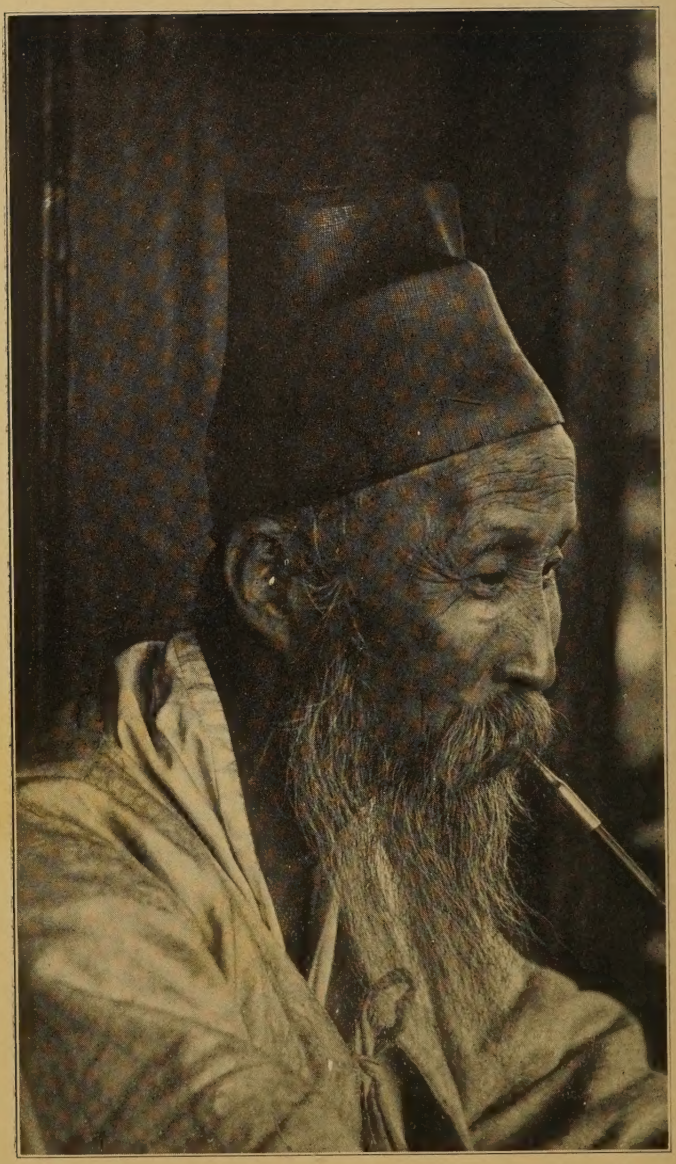

AN OLD KOREAN ANIMIST

POPULAR ASPECTS OF ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

BY
L. O. HARTMAN, Ph.D.

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FOREWORD

THE viewpoint of this book is that of a traveler in Oriental lands seeking to observe how the teachings of the various religions of the Far East actually work out in life. In connection with such a popular treatment of these faiths brief surveys of their fundamental theories also have been embodied, that the reader may get a proper setting for a study of the peculiar rites, ceremonies, and customs of these non-Christian peoples. Some attention likewise has been given to the lives of the founders and the prominent leaders of these sects, as well as to the reform movements that have modified their original doctrinal and practical attitudes. The author's primary endeavor, however, has been to find as adequate an answer as possible to the question, "What contribution do these Oriental faiths make toward the betterment of humanity and the progress of civilization?" Such a purpose, of course, can be but partially realized under the limitations imposed by the brief chapters of this volume, but it has been possible to indicate the general directions in which these faiths move and something as to their actual fruits in life.

There is need for the exercise of great care in

the interpretation not only of the teachings, but also of the strange ceremonies and customs of Oriental peoples. There is fundamentally an Eastern type of mind and attitude of soul with which the student of these religions must come into some sort of sympathy before he can hope to understand in any satisfactory measure the meaning of their doctrine and life. Moreover, as in the case of Christianity itself, Hinduism, Buddhism, and most of the other great religions of the world make large use of symbolism, a fact that opens the way for the severest kind of criticism from superficial or prejudiced investigators. Our own Christian ceremonies of baptism and the Eucharist, for example, could easily be made to appear highly ridiculous by an ignorant or insincere Oriental traveler in Europe or America. Therefore, we need in our study of Eastern faiths to be especially on our guard at this point, that no injustice may be done in the inte pretation of their peculiar expressions of worship. In general, two extremes must be avoided in seeking a correct estimate of the religious life of the Far East. The first is represented by the attitude of the narrow partisan who seeks to establish the superiority of Christianity by featuring the strange and sometimes degrading doctrines and customs of these religions without giving full credit for their nobler aspects; the other extreme is represented by the silly sentimentalists who find, especially in India, the complete solution for the religious problem, and by a

process of glossing over the sickening facts and reading into Hindu teachings the great Christian truths, declare that the Far East is the original source of all that is true, good, and beautiful. In view of these two dangers the author has sought to orient himself, to find the meanings behind the symbols, and, most of all, to give full credit for purity of motive, worthy ideal, and noble expression in life wherever found in his observation and study of these great faiths. But he has tried as well to discern their real weaknesses and their general tendencies in relation to the upward movement of the human race.

For those who may desire to engage in a further study of the various religions discussed in this volume a list of special reference books will be found at the close of each chapter and a general one at the end of the book. This bibliography contains some of the best results of accredited scholarship and presents the views and conclusions not only of English and American writers, but also those of native students and followers of these Oriental faiths. A careful reading, therefore, of the books thus listed will make for a creditable understanding of comparative religions and will tend to produce a balanced judgment as to their relative values in terms of life.

Brief articles on several of the religions represented in this book appeared in 1915 in Zion's Herald. By permission of the editors and publisher of that paper this material was made avail-

able and large parts embodied in the first four chapters of the present volume. The author desires to acknowledge this courtesy.

Chicago, November, 1916. L. O. H.

CHAPTER I
KOREA—SPIRIT LAND

God rules, so hold your spirit even;
He is impartial, all is well.

—*Old Korean Hymn.*

CHAPTER I

KOREA—SPIRIT LAND

THERE is no tribe or people on the face of the earth without a religion. This fact frequently has been disputed by writers of prominence and classified as the unscientific statement of partisans trying to make a case for faith. Whatever truth there may be in such an arraignment of motive, we know to-day, as a result of most thorough scientific investigation, that the religious impulse is world-wide in its scope. In so far as history is recorded, this universality also characterizes the past as well as the present. Although it is a fact that some obscure tribes have seemed to be without religious instincts, yet in every instance this assumption, upon closer study, has been proven to be entirely erroneous. That there should be mistaken judgments in the matter, however, is not strange, for these would easily arise as a result of differences in definition. Does the term "religion" involve a belief in God and a carefully wrought-out system of doctrine and ethics, or may we consider a people religious where there is only a primitive belief in magic? Surely, our definition ought to be broad enough to embrace both of these conceptions, and under such a view we may in-

clude the entire human family. Difficulties also arise in securing information as to some obscure forms of religion. Concealment of these deep instincts is frequently a fundamental requirement among savage worshipers. Moreover, it is no easy task, because of the prejudices of the investigator and the obstacles and misunderstandings in the processes of translating terms, to get the real facts as to certain religious beliefs and customs. In spite of these difficulties, however, and under a broad interpretation of the word, we are safe in saying that the religious instinct is a universal one.

But how did such an instinct originate? This question has led to almost endless debate in the field of comparative religion. Passing over that superficial explanation common to atheistic thinkers of a century or so ago, that all religion is an invention of priests, who capitalized on the fears of men for their own benefit, we note the theory of inherent religious instincts sometimes set forth in one form, sometimes in another. There are those who hold that in the beginning a full revelation of spiritual truth was imparted to the entire human race, but through sin and the subsequent degeneration of mankind this clear vision was dimmed and blurred. To-day, therefore, we find in the various religions of the world only fragments and glimpses of an eternal meaning. In another form, it is said that the race has been moving upward rather than downward through the centuries.

To all peoples the light of true wisdom has been given, and with the passing of time this light shines brighter and brighter until at last every soul shall attain to the perfect form of religion both in doctrine and in practice. One of the commonest explanations, however, connects the origin of religion with fear. Primitive man found himself in the midst of a strange world of mysterious happenings. There were devastating diseases and inscrutable death. There were the terrifying aspects of nature—darkness, extreme cold, thunder, lightning, storm, and flood. It was a world everywhere beset with calamity. Out of his helplessness and apprehension, therefore, he began to formulate plans to forestall or modify these imminent dangers. Upon such a basis, according to the fear theory, the pioneers of the race began to build the structure of religion. Still other students of religion affirm that man's early observance of the uniform connection between cause and effect accounts for its beginning. Even before the dawn of history our ancestors discovered that the race lived in the midst of a great world process as they watched the unfolding phenomena of nature and noted also the outcome of their own acts. From such observations was deduced the truth that every effect must have a cause, and this led, of course, to the proclamation of an unseen cause or causes back of the universe. Professor Daniel G. Brinton, however, carries this theory a step farther and offers still another ex-

planation of the origin of religion. He says that primitive man early recognized that the ultimate source of all force is conscious will, and that back of the world of things, therefore, there must be a supernatural intelligence with whom he could communicate. He arrived at this conviction by a simple analogy, for all his own activities were to be accounted for only by conscious will. Instinctively and spontaneously he applied the same easy explanation to the outside world. Professor Brinton says: "What the highest religions thus assume was likewise the foundation of the earliest and most primitive cults. The one universal trait amid their endless forms of expression was the unalterable faith in Mind, in the supersensuous as the ultimate source of all force, all life, all being."[1] Such are some of the main theories advanced to account for the religious instinct in primitive man. In seeking explanations, however, we always need to guard ourselves against that common desire to find just one simple, all-sufficient cause as the final solution to the problem in hand. Inasmuch as we have difficulty in accounting for modern tendencies in both the individual and collective human life of to-day, we certainly ought not to assume too comprehensive a knowledge of the life and mind of thousands of years ago.

Views as to the origin of religion, however, fall easily into two general classes—those that conceive of the matter in purely naturalistic terms,

[1] Religions of Primitive Peoples, pp. 47, 48.

and those that set forth the idea of a primal revelation in some form. It is hardly necessary to point out that most modern discussions are dominated by the first of these views and that the history of religion is quite generally conceived of as an evolutionary process from lower to higher. Such a theory is most attractive and falls in with the fashion of the day. We need to remember, however, that while the doctrine of evolution does have wide application, it also has its limitations, especially in the explanation of processes into which there is the play of free human wills. Here the evolutionist is likely to fall into the fallacy of the universal and mistake his own mental processes for the actual phenomena of reality. In the case in hand the naturalistic explanation of the origin of religion has all the marks of a true solution until we begin to review a wide range of facts that point in an entirely different direction. The fact that the various races of the world, as we know them to-day, all came from some one central birthplace, and that their history is characterized by repeated and quite extended migrations, has an intimate bearing on the problem. Persistent traditions likewise, universally handed down among the different nations of the world, tell in some form or other of the fall of man from a previous high estate. Moreover, in the actual development of religions monotheism does not tend to develop from a previous condition of animism or polytheism. Indeed, the situation is quite the reverse,

as is clearly illustrated especially in the cases of Korea, China, and India. The science of philology, finally, is decidedly against the easy naturalistic explanation of religious origins. These and numerous other considerations, therefore, lend great weight to the explanation as set forth in Old Testament literature.

The simplest form of religion of which we have historic knowledge is known by the general term *Animism*, which implies the custom of ascribing life to the objects of nature. With its apparently simple worship, however, there is considerable complexity in its development of varieties of spirits and multitudinous methods of propitiation. Those who hold to the naturalistic view of origins, of course, would point to animism as the primitive form of all religions, while those advocating the idea that man began his earthly career in a sinless state and in intelligent communion with his Maker would contend that animism was a degenerate form of religion. Animism in practice takes on many forms. Out of the view that all objects have souls there came a desire to avert the ill will of hostile spirits, whence originated the practice of *Magic*, a scheme of deceiving, flattering, or vanquishing evil spirits by uttering magic formulas, carrying objects, imitating certain acts, etc. This use of magic led naturally to the demand for the professional magician. He or she was known as a shaman, and that form of animism in which sorcery and exorcism are especially emphasized is

known as *Shamanism*, one of the best examples of which is to be found among the Koreans and the tribes of northern China. *Ancestor Worship* too is a characteristic of animistic peoples, for the departed relative joins the host of spirits and bears a very important relation to those still living. The doctrine of the *Transmigration of Souls* likewise is another outcome of animistic logic. Souls of men may occupy the bodies of lower animals, or even vegetables, and vice versa. Gods may become incarnate, and evil spirits may take possession of good men. This doctrine finds a full development especially in India. *Totemism* is another phase of animism found in a highly developed form among the North American Indians and the primitive races of Australia. According to this belief, a clan claims descent from some particular animal or plant. It is a kind of community tradition, but does not apply to individuals. Totem poles with their crude carvings erected in the villages of these savage tribes record their strange genealogies, and indicate the origin of the inhabitants. *Taboo* is one of the most potent forces in the animistic form of religion representing a low grade of ethics, altogether on the negative side. Taboo with its system of prohibitions exercises a terrible control over the lives of men, for one may expect to suffer the most severe supernatural penalties if he but touch a thing or person declared to be taboo. Moreover, the list of these prohibitions grows to such pro-

portions with the development of animism that the daily life of the people is made a grievous burden and is filled with superstitious dread. Another interesting animistic study is the growth of *Idolatry* out of the earlier *Fetishism*. Fetishism represents one of the methods of magic whereby supernatural powers are assigned to objects which are afterward used as fetishes. Idolatry is simply a more highly developed and systematic fetishism.

The Worship of Spirits

Korea affords a splendid field for the study of animism, especially in its shamanistic form, for the country has been so isolated from the rest of the world until modern times that we now find the beliefs and customs of hundreds of years ago almost in their original form. Although the outward signs of religion are somewhat meager in the "Land of the Morning Calm," still she has her full share of the various Oriental systems. It is said that away back in the dim and distant past, about the year B. C. 1122, a great leader by the name of Kija came over to what is now Chosen, or Korea, with a half defeated army from China. He soon overcame the wild tribes then inhabiting the peninsula and became the founder of a kingdom. Whether or not this be unreliable tradition or true history, certainly the Koreans must have come originally from China. So we are not surprised to find some of the same faiths prevailing in this land as flourish in that great republic. Confu-

STONE IMAGE AND LANTERN

SPIRIT POSTS

cianism, including the doctrine of ancestor worship as its most important teaching, prevails everywhere in Korea. Buddhism reached this land about A. D. 372, and soon began to wield an extensive influence, its missionaries taking the new faith even to Japan. The fall of the Koryu dynasty, however, was attributed to the Buddhists, and, therefore, this religion began to be despised. For five hundred years no Buddhist priest was allowed within the walls of Seoul, and the spirit of disfavor still continues. There is also some Taoism, but the followers are few. The great vital religion, however, which in the last analysis holds real sway over the people, is spirit-worship in the form of Shamanism. This faith controls the masses of the common people, and, in times of crisis, the aristocracy as well. It permeates and modifies every other faith so that all the above-mentioned religions are colored by its influence. According to this belief, the whole universe is alive with spirits. There are a few good spirits and many bad ones. Some are ethereal beings that have never known physical embodiment, others are ghosts of the dead. There are dragons and demons, fairies and goblins, witches and wizards, devils, women-foxes and women-wild-cats. The whole world is one of strange and dangerous enchantment. The Korean goes through life, therefore, in constant fear. At every turn he must consult the geomancer or the exorcist, for he is never safe, whether he be walking a country

road or sitting quietly on the floor of his home, whether he be about to bury his father or to marry his son. His existence is simply one long program of buying off evil spirits, in some fashion or other. Otherwise, he may expect the direst calamities to befall both his family and himself. The spirits will send smallpox, burn his house, steal his children, or even take his life. One can scarcely imagine the awful pathos of the situation, when a man's daily existence is thus constantly obsessed by a dreadful fear of impending doom.

Typical Korean Tales

Korea is so rich in fascinating folklore that from this source we may obtain a very good insight into the general nature of this type of religion. Dr. James S. Gale has translated some of the best of these stories,[2] and thus has rendered a splendid service. We select three of the best of these tales for direct glimpses into the life and imagination of these childlike Koreans. The first is typical of all animistic religions, for it deals with tree spirits. The title is "The Mysterious Hoi-Tree," and the author is Yi Ryuk, who lived in the fifteenth century. It runs as follows:

"Prince Pa Song's house was situated just inside the great East Gate, and before it was a large hoi tree. On a certain night the prince's son-in-law was passing by the roadway that led in front of the archers' pavilion. There he saw a great

[2] Korean Folk Tales.

company of bowmen, more than he could number, all shooting together at a target. A moment later he saw them riding, some throwing spears, some hurling bowls, some shooting from horseback, so that the road in front of the pavilion was blocked against all comers. Some shouted as he came by: 'Look at that impudent rascal! He attempts to ride by without dismounting.' They caught him and beat him, paying no attention to his cries for mercy, and having no pity for the pain he suffered, till one tall fellow came out of their serried ranks and said in an angry voice to the crowd: 'He is my master. Why do you treat him so?' He undid his bonds, took him by the arm, and led him home. When the son-in-law reached the gate he looked back, and saw the man walk under the hoi tree and disappear. He then learned too that all the crowd of archers were spirits, and that the tall one who had befriended him was a spirit too, and that he had come forth from their particular hoi tree."

Another tale is one of many that reveal the strong fear element in this primitive form of worship. The story-teller in this case is Im Bang, the son of a Korean governor. He was born in 1640 and himself became governor of Seoul in 1719, when he was in his eightieth year. "The Fearless Captain" illustrates the universal conflict between reason and superstition:

"There was formerly a soldier, Yee Man-ji of Yong-nam, a strong and muscular fellow, and

brave as a lion. He had green eyes and a terrible countenance. Frequently he said, 'Fear! What is fear?' On a certain day when he was in his house a sudden storm of rain came on, when there were flashes of lightning and heavy claps of thunder. At one of them a great ball of fire came tumbling into his home and went rolling over the veranda, through the rooms, into the kitchen and out into the yard, and again into the servants' quarters. Several times it went and came bouncing about. Its blazing light and the accompanying noise made it a thing of terror.

"Yee sat in the outer veranda wholly undisturbed. He thought to himself, 'I have done no wrong, therefore why need I fear the lightning?' A moment later a flash struck the large elm tree in front of the house and smashed it to pieces. The rain then ceased and the thunder likewise.

"Yee turned to see how it fared with his family, and found them all fallen senseless. With the greatest of difficulty he had them restored to life. During that year they all fell ill and died, and Yee came to Seoul and became a Captain of the Right Guard. Shortly after he went to North Ham-kyong Province. There he took a second wife and settled down. All his predecessors had died of goblin influences, and the fact that calamity had overtaken them while in the official quarters had caused them to use one of the village houses instead.

"Yee, however, determined to live down all fear

and go back to the old quarters, which he extensively repaired.

"One night his wife was in the inner room while he was alone in the public office with a light burning before him. In the second watch or thereabout, a strange-looking object came out of the inner quarters. It looked like a stump of a tree wrapped in black sackcloth. There was no definite shape to it, and it came jumping along and sat itself immediately before Yee Man-ji. Also two other objects came following in its wake, shaped just like the first one. The three then sat in a row before Yee, coming little by little closer and closer to him. Yee moved away till he had backed up against the wall and could go no farther. Then he said: 'Who are you, anyhow; what kind of devil, pray, that you dare to push toward me so in my office? If you have any complaint or matter to set right, say so, and I'll see to it.'

"The middle devil said in reply, 'I'm hungry, I'm hungry, I'm hungry.'

"Yee answered, 'Hungry, are you? Very well, now just move back and I'll have food prepared for you in abundance.' He then repeated a magic formula that he had learned, and snapped his fingers. The three devils seemed to be afraid of this. Then Man-ji suddenly closed his fist and struck a blow at the first devil. It dodged, however, most deftly, and he missed, but hit the floor a sounding blow that cut his hand.

"Then they all shouted, 'We'll go, we'll go, since

you treat guests thus.' At once they bundled out of the room and disappeared.

"On the following day he had oxen killed and a sacrifice offered to these devils, and they returned no more.

"*Note.*—Men have been killed by goblins. This is not so much due to the fact that the goblins are wicked as to the fact that men are afraid of them. Many died in North Ham-kyong, but those again who were brave, and clove them with a knife, or struck them down, lived. If they had been afraid, they too would have died."

"God's Way," a short tale by Yi Ryuk, is so modern in its form and philosophy that we almost need to be told that it comes from an animistic source:

"In a certain town there lived a man of fierce and ungovernable disposition, who in moments of anger used to beat his mother. One day this parent, thus beaten, screamed out, 'O, God, why do you not strike dead this wicked man who beats his mother?'

"The beating over, the son thrust his sickle through his belt and went slowly off to the fields where he was engaged by a neighbor in reaping buckwheat. The day was fine, and the sky beautifully clear. Suddenly a dark fleck of cloud appeared in mid-heaven, and a little later all the sky became black. Furious thunder followed, and rain came on. The village people looked out toward the field, where the flashes of lightning were

specially noticeable. They seemed to see there a man with lifted sickle trying to ward them off. When the storm had cleared away, they went to see, and lo, they found the man who had beaten his mother struck dead and riven to pieces.

"God takes note of evildoers on this earth, and deals with them as they deserve. How greatly should we fear!"

Spirits Great and Small

So multitudinous everywhere in nature are spirits like those in these stories that they even cannot be well classified. However, there are a few leading types that might be mentioned. The chief of all spirits is Hananim, the creator and conservator of the universe. His name comes from two Korean words meaning "Great One." A study of the attributes of this spirit and of the sayings about him reveals a striking similarity between this "Great One" and the God of Christianity. Indeed, the translators of the Bible found that this word conveyed the idea of our Supreme Being better than any other term in the language, and therefore adopted it as the Korean name for "God." Spirit-worship, as we have already indicated, is largely a religion of fear, and therefore Hananim, being a good spirit, does not come in for very much attention from the people. It is a striking fact nevertheless that in the midst of all this superstition and fear a conception like the following should be handed down through a thousand years of Korean history:

Flowers bloom and flowers fall,
Men have hopes and men have fears,
All the rich are not rich all,
Nor have the poor just only tears.
Men cannot pull you up to heaven,
Nor can they push you down to hell,
God [Hananim] rules, so hold your spirit even;
He is impartial, all is well.[3]

Another monster spirit is the dragon. He seems to rule over the colossal outbreaks of nature, such as terrific storms, waterspouts, etc. His favorite haunt is underneath the everlasting hills. Some of these dragons we saw depicted in reproductions from paintings found on the walls of ancient tombs in the Museum at Seoul. There were the blue dragon, the red dragon, and the yellow dragon. As the artist conceived them nearly a thousand years ago, when they were painted, these monsters were flying over the earth, breathing terror and slaughter as they rushed through the air. Then there are revengeful spirits, ghosts of the dead, who in the spirit world harbor their revenge and come back to earth to wreak their wrath upon their enemy. Loss of fortune, disease, and death are signs of the presence of these angry spirits. Fire spirits too abound. Hence if a house catches fire, no one must interfere, but, rather, it must be offered to the god, that he may be satisfied and not burn other houses in the village. The small-pox spirit also moves among the people, and is treated as an "honorable guest," lest he should be

[3] Translation by Dr. J. S. Gale.

offended and go farther in his deadly work. So these poor, deluded victims, paralyzed with fear, pretend that they are highly pleased that this dreadful spirit has deigned to pay them a visit. Demon generals to the number of more than eighty thousand heading innumerable hosts of devil spirits also ride through the air terrorizing the people. Tree spirits, on the other hand, appear to be gracious, especially those of the maidenhair fern. Offerings are brought and laid at the roots of trees in the hope that prayers may be answered. Tokgabi are elflike spirits that tease men and women in a semiserious fashion by jostling them, throwing stones, pulling pigtails, etc.

Strange Rites and Customs

Although these hundreds of thousands of spirits of every possible kind thus influence all sides of Korean life, still Shamanism boasts no temples, no priesthood, no ritual. There are, of course, plenty of shrines, devil posts, and other evidences of worship. Graves also become holy places, due to the combined teaching of Confucianism and spirit-worship. We had a good opportunity of seeing some material expression of spirit-worship during our visit to Korea at the tomb of Kija, the founder of the country. Beautifully located on a hillside in a grove about two miles from the city of Pyen Yang is this famous grave. In the foreground of the inclosure there stands a splendid stone lantern, just back of which is a table of the same material,

upon which the worshipers place food and drink for their departed ancestor, while in a semicircle about the altar stand a number of images of animals, the guardian spirits of the departed, for the Korean believes that every man has three souls, and that at death one of these goes to Hades or wanders about on earth, another takes up its residence in the ancestor tablet carefully preserved in the home of his descendants, while the third soul goes into the grave and abides there. While there are no regularly ordained priests in connection with spirit-worship, we find a vast number of magicians, geomancers, exorcists, and other interpreters of the spirit world organized loosely into guilds with certain rules and requirements as to the study of magic and the nature of spirits. Among these shamans two classes are especially powerful—the mutangs and the pansus. The mutangs are always women of a low type, in close league with the world of evil spirits. For a consideration they will persuade the spirits to desist from their pernicious work. The pansus are blind, and control the under-world of evil by means of force. As might be supposed, festival, wedding, and funeral occasions are the times when these persons reap their richest harvests, for these events are outstanding opportunities for the malicious spirits to get in their disastrous work. A unique example of the professional service of the mutangs is the custom of selling a boy to a demon. The ceremony takes place at some sacred spot

and is conducted with strange rites and sacrifices which continue at regular intervals after the sale is actually completed. The demon's name is then assumed by the boy and in consideration of this ceremony of sale he is supposed to receive unusual protection and assistance during the rest of his lifetime. Something of the extent and importance of these superstitions in the life of the people can be gathered from the tremendous cost of spirit-worship. Mrs. Isabella B. Bishop, in Korea and Her Neighbors, estimates that the fees of the shamans alone amount to two and a half million dollars annually.

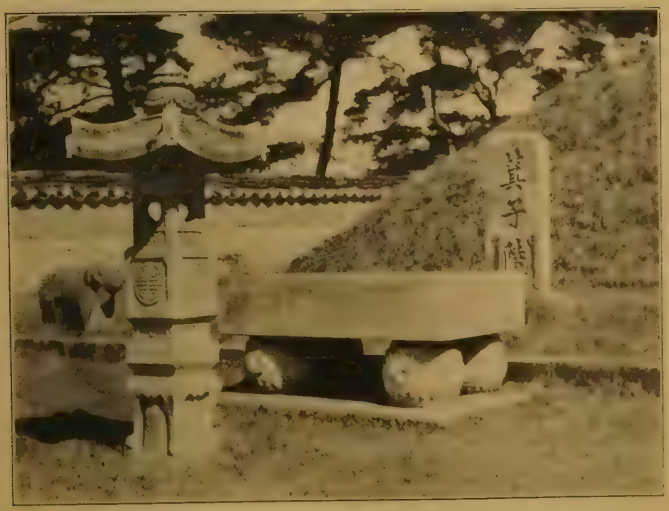
Funeral Ceremonies

Shamanism is best studied and understood in those matters which have to do with death, rather than in the events and experiences of life itself. Its teachings are revealed to the best advantage about the deathbed, in the preparation for burial, in the funeral ceremonies, the selection of the grave, and the worship that afterward goes on at this shrine. The influence of ancient ancestor-worship is, of course, strong at this point, and then, too, here is the place where the present world touches the vast unseen universe of spirits. Therefore we can easily understand how the doctrines of spirit-worship are so clearly revealed in the presence of the great mystery.

As soon as a man dies three bowls of rice and three pairs of shoes are prepared and taken to some

selected spot as an offering to the spirits This equipment is intended for the departed and his two spirit guardians who have the long trip to make into the world beyond. Then a sorcerer is called in to determine the lucky day for the funeral, and a geomancer to select a lucky burial place. The mourning clothes of ragged, patched sackcloth are donned, and the uncanny wailing for the dead begins. So full of fear are the people that everything about the funeral must be carried on with the strictest care, lest the evil spirits be offended. We had to bargain with an undertaker for an hour to secure some material having to do with funerals, for exhibit purposes, and then, because of the peculiar sacredness of the decorations, were compelled to pay at least five times their intrinsic value to secure them. The body of the dead in preparation for burial is wrapped in straw and placed on a gaudy bier carved with hideous faces to scare away the evil spirits. In the funeral procession there are first the torch-bearers, then the spirit-chair, in which is carried the ancestral tablet, the receptacle of one of the departed's spirits, followed by the bearers with the corpse. Afterward come the chief mourners, relatives, and friends, with the exception of women, who are not allowed to take part in the ceremony. The grave is generally finely located on some beautiful, sunny hillside. In life a dark, malarial valley is good enough, for in such places many of the villages are located, but in death the best

FUNERAL CHAIR WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE DEPARTED



THE GRAVE OF KIJA, FOUNDER OF KOREA

must be provided. After burial the grave becomes a shrine where the son must frequently come to see that his father's bones are undisturbed, to bring offerings of rice, and to seek in every way to make the departed comfortable especially by warding off evil spirits.

Spirit Worship and Christianity

Korea presents a unique opportunity for a comparison of Christianity, the most highly developed, with spirit-worship, the least systematic of all religions. Probably nowhere else in the world has the Christian missionary effort met with such immediate success as in the Hermit Kingdom, for within the period of thirty-one years, the life of organized Christian activity in this land, nearly two hundred thousand followers have been enlisted. This fact is due no doubt to the sudden awakening on the part of the people to the value of Western civilization, to a belief that Christianity might bring some kind of magical relief for bad social conditions, and to the ancient and prevalent respect for scholarship, met by the establishment of Christian schools and colleges. But to a still greater extent the warm reception accorded to the great Western religion grew out of the numerous points of contact between the Korean faith and that of the missionaries. To begin with, the fundamental fact that spirit-worship so strongly emphasizes the reality of the unseen world, makes it peculiarly hospitable to

the highly spiritual teachings of Christian missionaries. It is a great victory at the very start to have to deal with a spiritually rather than a materialistically inclined people, and whatever may be said as to the peculiar developments of the animistic faith, this essential conviction as to the reality of spiritual things is identical in both religions. Add to this consideration and as an outgrowth from it the belief in prayer and the tremendous earnestness manifested in its practice on the part of these spirit worshipers, and another important point of contact emerges. But of even more importance in this connection is the relatively lofty conception of God which characterizes not only the original faith of the Koreans, but even the Buddhism and the Confucianism of the Peninsula. In spite of the mass of superstitions and the myriads of bad spirits that control the life of the people, they have preserved in a most striking fashion a doctrine of the unity of God, and, moreover, there runs through the crude notions as to his nature and relationship to mankind a series of most worthy conceptions. Even the very physical environment of the land is favorable to its Christianization, for it is said that Korea is Palestine over again. The customs of the people too are, of course, Oriental and approximate in a high degree those of the Holy Land. With such similarities in fundamental beliefs and in a setting so like that in which the Bible was written, it is no wonder that Scripture teachings take on a peculiar

realism in Korea. There is here a vividness about the impression of the gospel message entirely unknown among Western peoples. For example, one day a native preacher was reading the story of the good Samaritan to his congregation when suddenly a man all absorbed in the tale cried out in excitement, "What was his name?" Dr. George Heber Jones relates the following incident which further illustrates this earnest attitude toward Bible teachings:

"A Korean came into the study of a missionary one day and said, 'I have been memorizing some verses in the Bible, and thought I would come and recite them to you.' The missionary listened while this convert repeated in Korean, without a verbal error, the entire Sermon on the Mount. Feeling that some practical advice might be helpful, the missionary said: 'You have a marvelous memory to be able to repeat this long passage without a mistake. However, if you simply memorize it, it will do you no good. You must practice it.' The Korean Christian smiled as he replied, 'That's the way I learned it.' Somewhat surprised, the missionary asked him what he meant, and he said: 'I am only a stupid farmer, and when I tried to memorize it the verses wouldn't stick. So I hit upon this plan. I memorized one verse and then went out and practiced that verse on my neighbors until I had it; then I took the next verse and repeated the process, and the experience has been such a blessed one that I am determined to learn

the entire Gospel of Matthew that way.' And he did it."[4]

The Outlook for Christianity in Korea

The short history of Christianity in Korea, therefore, has been marked by many manifestations of the most rapid progress and immediate success. The wholesale revivals, the record-breaking attendances at the prayer services, the numerous public confessions of terrible sins and crimes, and the exceptional zeal for Bible study remind one of the early days of Christianity, and seem to foretell a complete evangelization of the land in the near future. There are, however, other important elements entering into the situation. These also demand careful consideration in any estimate of the religious future of Korea. Centuries of a religion of fear have made their deep impression, and therefore the preaching and teaching which is now carried on under Christian auspices should be so shaped as to prevent the transference of this burden of superstition and fear to the new faith. That such an attitude toward life may be fostered along with gospel teachings is abundantly evidenced in the religious history of older Christian countries. Again, a narrow and mechanical interpretation of the Bible such as has characterized Korean evangelistic efforts in a few instances will issue in ultimate

[4] Pamphlet: The Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

disappointment so far as the vital triumph of Christianity is concerned. As in the case of children, the response of these animists to the new teaching is characterized by the strictest literalness. Christian missionaries, therefore, must lead them with infinite pains and tact from the formal statement into the deeper meaning of scriptural truths. There is likewise another danger that besets the Christian faith, even in more highly developed countries, and threatens to influence its course in Korea as well. It is the false mysticism of primitive religious development. Visions, direct revelations, demon-possession, and like manifestations characterize spirit-worship, and we find these same things gaining some control even in the Christian order. Whatever may be the meaning and value of such phenomena, it is always safe to say that their place should never be one of prominence, and that the main emphasis in Christian teaching must always be placed on friendship with God, high ethical ideals, and sincere service. If Korean Christian development is to follow these lines, it is of the highest importance that the very best missionary leadership should be enlisted, and that the splendid educational system already organized in this important field should be carefully fostered. Thus only can be fulfilled the prophecy of missionary statesmen, that out of Korea is destined to come the Christian leadership of the Far East.

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CHAPTER II
FIFTY CENTURIES OF WORSHIP

Recompense injury with kindness.—*Laotsze.*

Do not do unto others what thou wouldst not they should do unto thee.—*Confucius.*

CHAPTER II

FIFTY CENTURIES OF WORSHIP

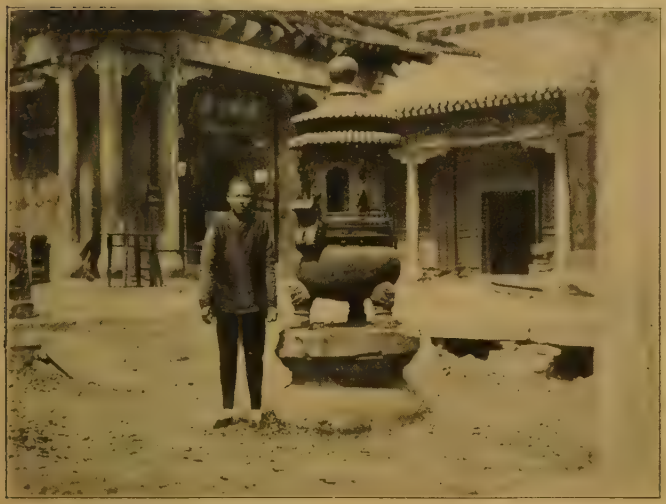
In the heart of the Chinese province of Shantung is the city of Taian, and looming up into the very clouds just back of the city is sacred Tai Shan, the oldest place of worship in the world, for on the summit of this mountain men have prayed continuously since before the days of Abraham. Thus does the religious life of China stretch back across the ages and root deep into the hoary past. So it may be truly said that the people of this ancient land have worshiped for more than half a century of centuries. China is blessed with many forms of religion to-day, but if one would find the essential character of the ancient faith, he must seek it in the key-word "Tao," meaning "road," or "way," for wrapped up in this one word is the great central doctrine of conformity to the order of nature. This in essence is the worship of Heaven, and as man shapes his thought and action in accordance with this "way," happiness becomes his inheritance. But let him depart from it, and nothing can save him from fatal disaster. This is the faith that permeates China, and out of such fundamental teaching have grown all the ethical principles, rules of conduct, and methods of worship. Of course animistic elements abound in this ancient

belief. There are tree spirits, mountain spirits, demons, and a large variety of household gods, as well as thousands of fanciful legends and multitudinous superstitions, but it is a great step in advance over spirit-worshiping religious cults to find in early Taoism a conception, though crude, of law and order. Passing over Buddhism and Mohammedanism as imported faiths, the vitality of which, especially in the case of the former, has depended upon the possession of universistic principles, we find that the early unsystematized and half-defined Taoism of China moves with the passing of the years in a divided stream of interpretation. One of these is a formulated Taoism, of which Laotsze may be considered the real founder. The other is the ethical system of Confucius. These two great prophets of the Chinese religion were contemporaries, but their views were quite diverse. Laotsze was of a philosophic cast of mind and meditated in seclusion upon the great problems and mysteries of the universe, while Confucius was of a very practical turn and devoted himself to the formulation of ethical principles. And yet ancient Taoism colors and influences the work of each.

The Teachings of Laotsze

Laotsze's teachings were of such a mystical type that even Confucius himself after visiting him confessed that he could not understand his doctrine. It has been said, however, that Laotsze

THE SOUTH GATE OF HEAVEN ON TAI SHAN



THE OLDEST PLACE OF WORSHIP IN THE WORLD

believed in God. If so, his conception was extremely abstract, corresponding somewhat to the capitalized "Force" of the scientists. But he did hold to a belief in the immortality of the soul and taught that it was a state to be earnestly sought by the practice of virtue and the cultivation of longevity. It is also contended by some scholars of repute that the germ of the doctrine of the Trinity is to be found in Taoist teachings, but this is by no means clear, for the view depends upon a somewhat fanciful interpretation. Salvation, Laotsze believed, consisted in getting the heart right by a process of ascetic practice and a loss of self in the Tao, as against any reformation by ethical precepts and formal legislation. The gods of Taoism are many, due to the animistic influence of this nature-worship. The Tao idea is hard to define, but seems to correspond in some measure in the development of its meaning to our term "Absolute." Heaven and Earth, in a sense personified, are considered to be the offsprings of this Tao, and are, therefore, most important objects of worship. Emperors, heroes, and other outstanding personalities after death also are raised to the Taoist pantheon. Finally a multitude of local deities, spirits, and demons put the number of Chinese gods almost beyond computation. In the Taoism of to-day, therefore, we find a great hierarchy of priests and priestesses acting as intermediaries between the people and these numerous gods and claiming power to exorcise

evil spirits and avert disaster. Thus these leaders play upon the fears and superstitions of the people and exercise a tremendous influence throughout the nation.

China's Greatest Teacher

Turning now from Laotsze's interpretation of ancient Taoism, we find in Confucianism a second mighty religious influence, although the system really is not a religion at all, but a code of ethical teachings. Confucius was fundamentally agnostic as to the existence of a God and life eternal, but constantly emphasized the importance of righteousness in the life that now is. His career was a mixed one. Born in the year B. C. 551, things were in the same state of uncertainty that characterizes the China of to-day. Political intrigue and plottings permeated the land. There were also revolutions among the states, and the Chou Dynasty was tottering. His father was a military officer and traced his descent from the royal house of Yin. In this atmosphere of political and military life the Great Teacher began his career and we, therefore, are not surprised that, in addition to his great lifework of teaching, he also held such positions as keeper of the granary, superintendent of public fields, governor of his town, and chief criminal judge. For a number of years Confucius wandered from place to place studying and elucidating his ethical principles, and gathering disciples. Of his writings the most important are a

Book of History, and Spring and Autumn. The latter is a history of his own state of Lu. The famous Sayings of Confucius, however, were probably remembered and gathered together by his disciples decades after his death which took place in his seventy-second year. Something of the greatness and keen ethical insight of the man is well reflected in the following selections taken from these collected sayings,[1] all of which are of a high order:

Man is born upright. If he cease to be so, and live, he is lucky to escape.

Listen much, keep silent when in doubt and always take heed of the tongue; thou wilt make few mistakes.

Worship as though those ye worship stood before you.

We know not life; how can we know death?

As long as his father lives, a son should study his wishes; after he is dead he should study his life.

The fault is to cleave to a fault.

A man and his faults are of a piece.

Honeyed words and flattering looks seldom speak of love.

The chase of gain is rich in hate.

A heart set on love will do no wrong.

A man without love, what is courtesy to him?

To rank the effort above the prize may be called love.

Who contains himself seldom goes wrong.

Make faithfulness and truth thy masters.

Will the right; hold to good won; rest in love; move in art.

Living on coarse rice and water, with bent arm for pillow, mirth may be ours; but ill-gotten wealth and honors are to me a wandering cloud.

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[1] The Sayings of Confucius, translated by Leonard A. Lyall.

A gentleman has nine aims: to see clearly, to understand what he hears, to be warm in manner, dignified in bearing, faithful in speech, painstaking at work, to ask when in doubt, in anger to think of difficulties, in sight of gain to remember right.

Tzu Kung asked: "Can one word cover the whole duty of man?"

The Master replied: "Fellow-feeling, perhaps. Do not do unto others what thou wouldst not they should do unto thee."

The Home Town of Confucius

The province of Shantung is known as the "Holy Land of China," for out of this region have come persons and influences that have shaped the religious life of all China for a period of fully five thousand years. It was in this province that Confucius was born and died. Mencius also lived in a town only a few miles from the home of Confucius. Many of the sacred books were produced here. The Tung Yoh, also called Tai Shan, the "Greatest Mountain," said to be the most sacred spot in all China, looms up with its beautiful South Gate of Heaven in the midst of this same old Province of Shantung.

Early one morning we started by train on a pilgrimage to the grave of the Great Sage, completing the last six miles of the journey in a wheelbarrow over the roughest of country paths. Just as the morning light was breaking over the fields of green wheat we saw in the distance the walls of Chu Fu, where nearly twenty-five hundred years ago this remarkable teacher tried to point

out the way of wisdom to his dull fellow townsmen. To-day the town is largely under the control of a lineal descendant of Confucius, who traces his relationship back through more than seventy generations. From all accounts, however, the kinship is one merely of physical ties, for the Duke does not seem to observe very strictly the precepts of his great ancestor.

The moment one enters the gate of Chu Fu he literally feels the atmosphere of the distant past. The crumbling walls and the ancient archway silently speak of bygone centuries. The narrow streets, the rough pavements, the decaying shop buildings, are mute witnesses telling the story of another age. The groups of idlers, some of them dozing in the broken-down doorways, add their touch to the scene, while a funeral procession with its noisy mourners following a huge wooden coffin, completes the picture. Down this same street with these same cries more than two thousand years ago they bore China's greatest prophet to his last resting place. The whole impression of antiquity is intensified as one enters the great gate of the burial ground. First he must walk down a long walled lane to another gate, through which he passes into a beautiful grove of ancient cedars planted about the time Columbus discovered America. As the breezes blow through the branches of these trees the melancholy moaning seems almost to shape itself into the song of Ecclesiastes, "Vanity

of vanities, all is vanity." From the grove we continued our walk under another archway and across a stone bridge to the third and last gateway. Here an old man volunteered to guide us to the famous grave. On the way he showed us a decaying stump carefully boxed in with thick walls of brick. This, he said, was the last remains of a tree planted by the disciples of Confucius at the time of his burial! Farther on we passed numerous shrines erected by prominent scholars as memorials to themselves. Then we came to the grave of the grandson of Confucius, and finally to another marked with a plain tablet which tells us that here the "honorable teacher" lies buried. There is nothing elaborate about the tomb. The tablet, an urn, and the mound in the background—this is all; but here lies one of the world's greatest teachers, the founder of a system that has influenced uncounted millions of human beings for seventy-five generations. As we waited meditating on the life and influence of this great man, our old guide brought us a pot of hot tea, for it was now breakfast time. He too traces his ancestry back through the centuries directly to one of Confucius's own servants.

From the grave we made our way to the great Temple of Confucius, a mile or two distant from the burial ground. This place too is full of interest, for here the old well and the site of the home of the Sage are to be seen. Before the

THE GRAVE OF CONFUCIUS.

MARBLE PILLARS, TEMPLE OF CONFUCIUS

main temple is a magnificent row of marble pillars with carvings three inches deep. These are outstanding works of art unsurpassed anywhere in the world. In another temple hall is a series of more than a hundred etchings in marble illustrating incidents in the life of the Great Teacher. These tablets were placed here during the lifetime of Confucius and are much prized by the Chinese people, as is evidenced by the fact that some of the pictures are worn quite smooth through the oft-repeated process of obtaining "rubbings," or paper transfers in ink. In some cases there are only left faint traces of the original lines cut nearly twenty-five hundred years ago. There are several other halls in the temple inclosure to the wife, father, mother, and other relatives, and ancestors of Confucius, and it is said, with good reason, that more care is exercised in preserving these buildings and grounds than appears in the case of any other sacred place in China.

Ancestor-Worship in Canton

Ancestor-worship thus illustrated in the city of Chu Fu in the case of the Great Teacher, himself, is the most important and universal doctrine of Confucianism, for everywhere in China one finds evidence of its far-reaching influence upon the life of the people. In Canton, for example, is located the great Chun Ka Chil, a magnificent stone structure devoted entirely to ancestor-

worship. This temple was built by members of the wealthy Chun clan, one of the most influential families in China, and contains thousands of ancestor tablets. Our guide told us that these record the genealogy of over sixty generations. Most of the tablets were beautifully gilded in memory of the departed members of the clan, but some were painted pure white to represent persons still living. Twice every year the members of this great clan come to the Chun Ka Chil for a day of ancestor worship, and throughout the entire year it is visited daily by devout travelers. In this ancient metropolis we also visited the curious City of the Dead. It is a real "city," for there are streets and strange little houses in which repose the dead waiting for the proper lucky day of burial. The visitor may enter these silent houses with his gifts and pay his respects to the spirits of the departed. Around the huge coffins are to be found offerings of every description. Besides food, other articles such as clothing, hats, and shoes, are brought to add to the comfort of the deceased in his journey to the Beyond, and to provide for his well-being in his new abode. In one of these little houses we saw a miniature gold mine made of gilded paper, indicating that the donor hoped to insure the financial prosperity of his relative in the other world. We also stood before the great coffin in which reposed the body of the late Governor Chen Chung, of Kwantung Province. He died only a few months before our

visit, and the numerous gaudy banners hanging about the room told the story of his attainments and the high esteem in which he was held. Beneath the coffin was a bowl of rice placed there by his relatives that he might not go hungry in the world of spirits.

The Holy Mountain of China

No traveler in China can afford to omit a trip to sacred Tai Shan, to which reference has already been made. Thousands of pilgrims visit this holy mountain every spring to pay their vows and to seek the intercession of the Lady of the Mountain in the fortunes of their everyday lives. It is a long, hard trip by chair from the town of Taianfu at its base to the South Gate of Heaven at the summit, although the thousands of indescribably miserable beggars shouting "Casha, Casha," at every step, break the monotony and remind the traveler that if he would lay up merit, he must fling at least one coin to each suppliant. In spite of the difficulties of the ascent, the hot sun, and the beseeching beggars, however, the trip is well worth while, not only for the sake of the splendid view of the Chinese "Land of Palestine" afforded from this point, but also because of the world-old associations of the sacred summit itself. Up this very ascent a hundred and ten years before the birth of Christ the Chinese emperor of that period climbed with his retinue and performed

a sacrifice to Heaven. During the night, so the record runs, there was a light and a white cloud hovering over the altar, and the emperor himself declared that out of the cloud he heard a voice speaking to him.

There are several temples on these rocky peaks, each full of interest. In one carefully bolted and barred is a great image of the Sacred Lady of the Mountain, at whose feet we saw, through a crack in the door, a vast collection of offerings—money, silver images, shoes, wearing apparel, and food. These offerings pile up throughout the months, and once each year the Taoist priests open the doors and gather the accumulated wealth. Just in front of another temple on the highest peak is a plain shaft of stone some twelve feet in height called the "Uninscribed Tablet," a description of which we had read in a history of Shantung Province before making this trip up the mountain. It is said to have been erected at about the beginning of the Christian era. The famous tablet, however, is not strictly "uninscribed," for there is a single Chinese character carved thereon. After hunting for some time to find this character we consulted the resident priest of the Taoist Temple and found him in complete ignorance as to the matter. Persevering, however, in our search we carefully scanned every inch of the tablet's surface from top to bottom and at last were rewarded by finding the *Ti* near its base. The significance of

this ancient monument and its mysterious inscription becomes apparent in the light of the words of that high authority, Dr. James Legge, regarding this particular Chinese ideograph. He says: "*Ti* has presented that absolute deity in the relation to men of their lord and governor. *Ti* was to the Chinese fathers, I believe, exactly what God was to our fathers, whenever they took the great name on their lips."[2] So this monument seems to reveal a conception of God on the part of these ancients strikingly similar to the Christian idea. There are two possible explanations in connection with this strange inscription. One is the hypothesis of Dr. Legge adopted after a most exhaustive study of the history of Chinese words, "Five thousand years ago the Chinese were monotheists—not henotheists, but monotheists."[3] Upon this view it is quite probable that the little *Ti* tells the story of an early stage in the development of Chinese religious life when the people had as clear a conception of the unity and personality of God as that held by the Christians of to-day. However, there is another possible explanation for the presence of this character on the Uninscribed Tablet. In the province of Shensi there was discovered in the year 1625 a great stone since known as the Nestorian Monument. In 1907 Mr. Frits V. Holm, a member of the Royal Asiatic

[2] The Religions of China, p. 11.
[3] Ibid., p. 16.

Society, organized an expedition for the purpose, if possible, of securing this famous tablet. He spent much time and money upon the task and engaged in well-nigh endless negotiations with the Chinese for the purchase of the stone. In the end, however, he failed in these efforts to buy the original monument, but was successful in having an exact replica produced which may now be seen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the city of New York. The Nestorian Monument, about whose genuineness there now can be no controversy, tells the story of a very early attempt at the Christianization of China, and is of deep interest to all concerned in Chinese missionary effort. Nestorian priests came to China about the sixth century and began to preach and teach with such success that Christianity in this form flourished with the approval of the emperors for several centuries. The Nestorian monument was erected by these native converts in A. D. 781, but the Chinese and Syriac characters carved deeply on its surface are still so distinct that they can be read with ease. At the top of the tablet is a crude representation of the cross, while just below is a long eulogy over the "Propagation of the Illustrious Religion in China." This is ollowed by an "Ode," one stanza of which, from the translation of Mr. A. Wylie, we quote:

The true Lord is without origin, profound, invisible, and unchangeable, with power and capacity to perfect

and transform. He raised up the earth and established the heavens.

In view, then, of the history of this monument and the content of its inscriptions, it may be possible that the *Ti* on the Uninscribed Tablet in Shantung Province was also the work of these early Nestorian Christians.

A Chinese Hell

Not far from the foot of Tai Shan is the Taoist Temple of Hell, where are portrayed in endless variety the terrible punishments which sinners must endure in the future world. Compared with these, the Doré illustrations of Dante's "Inferno" are extremely mild presentations. Nor does it appear that the artists have overlooked any in the whole category of sins known to humanity. Murder, stealing, lying, adultery, cruelty, cheating, tax-dodging—every wrong has its dreadful consequences most realistically displayed. Among some of the milder expressions of retribution we noticed one poor sinner having his arm torn out of its socket. Near by was another group of images representing two demons sawing asunder the body of a criminal. Another unfortunate was crying out in excruciating agony while a fiend bored into one of his ears with a heated rod. Farther on in this journey through Taoist Inferno we came upon several devils busy with fiendish deliberation and delight at the task of disemboweling a poor victim, who was represented as writhing in inexpressible anguish.

As we were about to leave this dreadful place we said to the Taoist priest in charge of the Temple, "In the light of all this, why do not the people of Taian quit their sinning?"

In reply he said with a weary shake of his head, "Ah, they are a bad lot."

In one section of this "Hell" we found a group of three figures representing Confucius, Buddha, and Laotsze standing in the midst of the sinners in torment. Evidently, their presence in this place represents some dim conception of the possibility of salvation after death and the disciplinary nature of punishment. That these three teachers representing three different religions should all be found together in a Taoist Hell is not in the least incongruous, but, rather, quite characteristic of the country, for the Chinese see no inconsistency in professing two or even three religions at the same time. Consequently, we do not find in China the strife and intolerance between followers of rival faiths that sometimes prevail in other lands. This fact is due in part no doubt to the simplicity and indefiniteness of the doctrine of Tao, which makes it hospitable to worship in all forms, but it is also due to the kinship assumed by the Chinese of Confucianism, Buddhism, and even Mohammedanism and Christianity, to Taoism.

The Worship of Heaven

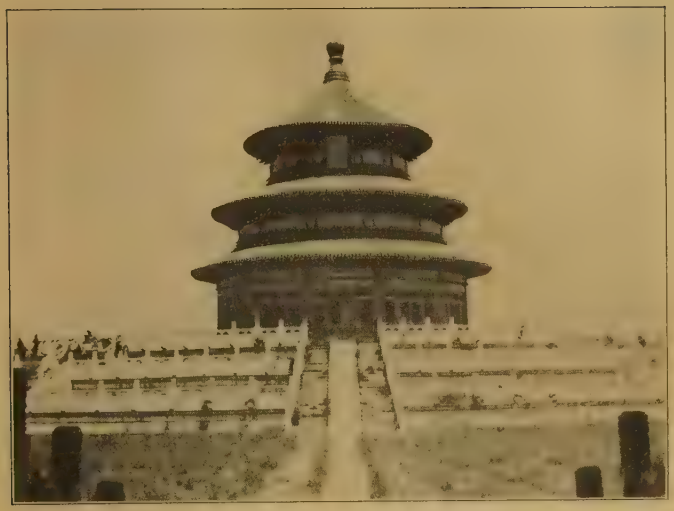
No one can understand the religious life of

China without some knowledge of the close relation of religion and government that has marked the development of the country. The emperor has always been thought of as the "Son of Heaven," and, therefore, the medium through whom the people were to receive blessings from above. In his representative capacity he becomes the high priest of the faith, and finally takes his place among the gods themselves. A visitor to the old capital of Nanking should not fail to see the examination halls now almost in ruins. These thousands of little booths tell the story of the old order when Confucianism was the state religion and a mastery of its ethical precepts was necessary if one were to secure a government position. This old instinct that the ruler of the land must have some unique connection with the powers of the universe still lives even in these days of the Republic.

Recently much has been said and written about the revival of the old state religion due to the visit of the late President Yuan Shih Kai to the famous Temple of Heaven in Peking. The significance of this visit has been variously interpreted. Some saw in it a bona fide attempt to revitalize Universism. Others believed that the pilgrimage was made for political purposes, especially to enlist the older and more conservative people with the new government. In view of the recent abortive attempt on the part of the late president to reestablish the monarchy

and to have himself elected emperor, the meaning of this ceremony becomes quite apparent. It was doubtless intended to be one of the first steps in preparing the people for the contemplated reactionary movement.

The Temple of Heaven was erected during the Ming dynasty (fifteenth century), and in former times it was the custom of the emperor to worship there three times each Chinese cycle. On the day appointed, with a great retinue of followers and musicians, he visited first the Imperial Ancestral Temple, where he worshiped Shang Ti (Supreme Ruler) and his own ancestors, thence he proceeded to the Sacrificial Altar, and after a brief tour of inspection finally returned to the Palace of Abstinence, where the night was spent in fasting and meditation. In the morning came the ceremony proper, when on the Great Altar in the open air he offered sacrifice and uttered the prayer to Heaven. The Temple of Heaven is a beautiful circular building with a roof of finely enameled blue tiles; but we had to be content with the exterior view, for the doors are kept locked except during the visit of the ruler of the land. Near by is the Altar of Heaven, consisting of three large circular terraces each inclosed with a beautifully carved marble balustrade. It was on the main platform here that Yuan Shih Kai shortly before his death performed his acts of worship in adoration of Heaven, after an early morning trip in an automobile



THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN

A CORNER IN THE TEMPLE OF HELL

from his royal palace. Subsequently he took part in another ceremony and headed another procession that followed the same road out of the Tartar City. This time Yuan Shih Kai went not to sacrifice to Heaven, but to be laid in his last resting place, while his spirit sped away to the realm of the gods, for to-day in the minds of millions of conservative Chinese the modern president, Son of Heaven, has become a god like the emperors of old.

China's Great Awakening

Out of the background of all this interesting past is emerging to-day the new China, religiously as well as socially and politically. The relatively superior conception of God, the fine ethical ideals, the instinct of respect for an orderly universe—all these and many other good characteristics of the old faith combine to give a peculiarly favorable reception to Christian teaching. And herein lies the hope of China, for, in spite of those elements in her faith that ought to have spelled light and progress, she has signally failed religiously, and therefore along other lines of development as well. Says that unbiased scholar, Dr. J. J. M. de Groot: "The conclusion to be drawn from the history of the development of the Taoist religion is that in spite of the sublime Universistic principle, it has not been able to rise above idolatry, polytheism, polydemonism, and anthropotheism, but has, on the

contrary, systematically developed all these branches of the great tree of Asiatic paganism. The same judgment must be pronounced with respect to the branch of Universism which we call Confucianism."[4]

But the modern awakening in China to the meaning and value of Christianity and its essential superiority to other faiths is real and significant. The reception of this Western religion is not like the easy tolerance manifested toward Buddhism and Mohammedanism, nor merely a polite acceptance of gospel teachings because of the regard of the Chinese for the American and British nations. There is a growing respect for Christianity and a spreading conviction that it brings the true solution of the religious, and, by implication, of many other problems, faced by the Chinese nation, as indicated in the following cablegram sent by Mr. E. T. Williams, chargé d'affaires of the American Legation in Peking in 1913.

Peking, April 19, 1913.

SECRETARY OF STATE, Washington.

The following message adopted by the Cabinet was sent yesterday by the Chinese government to the provincial authorities and leaders of the Christian Churches in China: "Prayer is requested for the National Assembly now in session; for the new government; for the President who is to be elected; for the constitution of the Republic; that the government may be recognized by the Powers; that peace may reign within our country; that strong and virtuous men may be elected

[4] Religion in China, p. 189.

to office; and that the government may be established upon a strong foundation. Upon receipt of this telegram you are requested to notify all the churches in your Province that April twenty-seventh has been set aside as a day of prayer for the Nation. Let all take part."

WILLIAMS.

That this awakening is vital is likewise revealed in the significant words of Mr. Teng, representing the Chinese minister of education at the commencement exercises of one of the leading Christian universities of China, in June, 1915. On this occasion, after the diplomas had been presented to the twenty-two graduates, we heard him say, "Now we must rise quickly to the standard of Western civilization." Elaborating the statement, he went on to assert that the keynote of the success of Westerners lies in their Christian morality. China's morality, he declared, is peculiarly her own, while Christianity presents a standard of morality of universal application. Young men in China to-day are eager for Christian education, not only on account of the training in English and modern sciences afforded by missionary schools and colleges, but also because they desire to understand and realize the Christian program of life. That Christianity does thus vitally attract the youth of China is again illustrated by the fact that since the foundation of Peking University (a missionary institution), over twenty-five years ago, not a single person has been graduated who has not

professed to be a follower of Jesus Christ, although these students have never been under religious compulsion and always have been left free to choose their own course in life. Missionary colleges, hospitals, and professional schools are everywhere crowded with just such earnest young men. So along every line of thought and activity unprejudiced travelers, as well as the missionaries themselves, testify to the cordial welcome Christianity is receiving throughout the new Republic and the rapid progress it is making in the evangelization of the country. The future is involved in many complexities. The outcome of the European war, the attitude of Japan, the internal conditions of China herself all combine to discount the value of any prophecy that might be made. It is conceivable that there might be a reaction and a revival of ancient Taoism in some modified form. It is likewise conceivable that the progress of Christianity might be greatly retarded, and that of Buddhism greatly accelerated, if China should finally come under some form of Japanese control. There is also the possibility of the emergence of an agnostic and materialistic attitude toward religious problems under the rapid development of commercialism. The probability, however, is that Christian ideals of life more and more will develop and control the people of China, especially if the leaders of this faith in the home lands measure up to the ever-increasing opportunities with an ade-

quate supply of men and resources and continue to work out their propaganda around a worthy educational movement.

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CHAPTER III
THE MYSTICAL HINDUS

Who knows exactly and who shall in this world declare whence and why this creation took place? The gods are subsequent to the production of this world, then who can know whence it proceeded, or whence this varied world arose, or whether it uphold itself or not? He who in the highest heaven is the ruler of this universe does indeed know; but not another one can possess this knowledge.—*The Rig-Veda.*

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTICAL HINDUS

Our little party of four, a Christian missionary, his two children, and the writer, started very early one morning by rail in a third-class carriage for Hardwar to witness the great Hindu mela, which continues almost uninterruptedly here throughout the year, for it is at this place that the holy Ganges pours fresh from the Himalayas. It is said that the famous river flows through the god Shiva's hair at its source in the mountains, hence its waters are very sacred and especially so near the springs themselves. The train was crowded with the ghostly forms of sleeping pilgrims, all seeking merit in a visit to the river, where they were soon to engage in earnest devotions, washing away their sins in the sacred stream. It was still early when the guard called "Hardwar" and we alighted from the train. After a hurried breakfast in a *dak bungalow* we joined the procession of pilgrims and marched down the dusty road to the river itself. Already hundreds were bathing at the ghats, the holy men had taken up their positions by the roadside, and the Brahman priests were chanting their ritual. No one can do justice to a mela by mere description. It needs to be seen to be adequately appreciated. Such a

gathering seems to be a kind of cross between an American county fair and an old-fashioned camp meeting. A mela is a religious affair, but it also has other important characteristics, for it combines with the devotions a great deal of recreation, social intercourse, and even a fair amount of business. Hindu pilgrims come for miles to attend these religious festivals, where they not only bathe and pay their vows but also meet their friends and engage in a general good time.

Among the most interesting features at such a gathering are the fakirs, or "holy men," already mentioned. These half-naked individuals, covered with coatings of ashes, are generally to be seen sitting within a circle of slow-burning cow-dung fires. All around them are devout followers, some bowing prostrate, others looking on in wonder and admiration. At a mela in another city we saw among the fakirs a woman priestess. Before her was a group of her own sex busy consulting as to the great questions of religion, and doubtless, also as to the practical problems of their everyday lives. On her head she wore a gigantic stack of false hair made of rope, and her body, covered with ashes, was scantily clad in a few dirty rags. One only had to look at her shrewd face, however, to instinctively cry "fraud." Indeed, many of these fakirs follow the profession largely for revenue, and do not command the respect of the Brahman

PROCESSION AT A HINDU MELA

A DEFORMED FAKIR

leaders, though a few of them are intensely earnest souls. At the bathing ghats the scene is equally interesting. Hundreds of devotees in brilliant-colored garments swarm over the steps leading down to the water, while standing up to their waists in the stream are multitudes of worshipers bathing and reciting their prayers as they face the rising sun. We wandered on past shrines and temples, stopping now and then to view some strange sight. Here was a man with a five-legged calf decked out in gaudy trappings. Evidently, the pilgrims appreciated the unusual sacredness of the animal, not knowing that the fifth leg had been grafted on, for they were making the contributions expected of them. Out under the blazing sun at another place there sat on a little cart a deformed fakir who had allowed one of his legs to grow stiff across the back of his neck that thus he might expiate his sins. Another lay under a tree on his bed of spikes. Still another one of these ascetics had held his hand in a clinched position until the finger nails had grown through the palm and actually protruded from its back. Finally we came to a figure meditating alone by the side of the road. We stopped before him, and with true Oriental politeness he made us feel that we were not intruding and seemed to be inclined to engage in conversation. The subject, of course, was religion, for with the Hindu religion is everything. Said he: "Have you ever seen God?

All my life I've traveled about from place to place and have asked hundreds and hundreds this question, but, alas! I've found no man who has ever seen him."

The mela with its worshipers and this holy man with his question typify India. Millions upon millions of pilgrims are traveling in a never-ceasing quest for the Eternal. From high-caste Brahman to the despised Shudra, through every stage of society men are searching for God and seeking to realize him in immediate communion. And this one great fact is the key to a sympathetic understanding of the complexities of this highly mystical faith. Indeed, nowhere is there so much need that the Western student should orient himself as in the case of Hinduism. It is easy to accept the snap judgment of the superficial tourist or the missionary of narrow outlook and see nothing worthy in this religion that nevertheless claims more than two hundred million adherents. A critic might also dwell on the darker realities of Hinduism, contrasting them with the nobler ideals of Christianity, and conclude that there is nothing worth while in this Indian mysticism. But such a course is not altogether fair. We ought, rather, to compare the best teachings and expressions of each faith if we are to arrive at sound conclusions. Of two things, however, we may be very sure. The first is the absolute sincerity and quenchless zeal of the Hindu people in their search for the

final truth and meaning of human life. Nowhere on earth, not excepting even Christian lands, is there such universal spiritual earnestness. Of course there has been much stumbling and blundering, but in India as nowhere else the religious issue has permeated and controlled every thought and act of men's daily lives. The second fact that we must recognize is that underlying the whole Hindu system there is a considerable amount of robust, even if erroneous, thinking. We must not conclude that the Oriental has not faced the philosophic problem, because some of his practices appear foolish to our Occidental minds, for the doctrines expounded in the sacred literature of India are based upon a philosophy that challenges our most earnest attention. We do not yet thoroughly understand the significant teachings of the ancient Vedas and the later Upanishads. Immanuel Kant, the greatest philosopher since Plato, expounded in his Critique of Pure Reason the now familiar doctrine of the relativity of all knowledge. It may be of interest to know that the Brahmans a thousand years before the German philosopher was born were basing their systems and practice upon this very principle. They did not provide, however, for the practical reason as did Kant, and hence Hinduism took on a paralyzing mystical development based upon this skepticism. Moreover, the student of Hinduism, whatever he may think of its fundamental assumptions, must maintain

some respect for the intellectual courage with which its leaders face the bad implications of their pantheism. With a startling boldness they accept the intellectual and ethical confusion arising from the complete identification of God with the universe, carry the contradictions straight into the nature of the Eternal himself, and proclaim that there we must face and settle the problem, though to the Hindu there is no more difficulty at this point than is to be found in the contradictory aspects of nature herself as represented in his goddess, Kali.

Turning to popular Hinduism, nothing will so contribute to an understanding of its strange rites and practices as a study of Christian mysticism, for every line of Hindu religious development finds in the history of Christianity a parallel in the false mystical element that has characterized to some extent every step in the growth of our faith. Passivity rather than activity as an attitude toward life's problems, a desire for direct emotional communion with God without the interference of slow intellectual and practical processes, voices and special revelations from God himself, ascetism with its meditations and self-tortures, large use of an unregulated symbolism in the interpretation of sacred literature and religious practices, indifference as to ethical distinctions, and actual immoralities in the name of the faith are the common tendencies of both Christian and Hindu mysticism. There is this

difference, however, that in the case of Christian development there always has been a wholesome respect for history and the strong restraining hands of definite intellectual and ethical ideals to prevent the false mystical from gaining control, while in India the endeavor to realize God and to lose the individual soul in the All-Soul has swept everything from its moorings.

Nevertheless, the East has a most important message for the West, for we here in America and Europe are in just as grave danger at another extreme, as is overwhelmingly illustrated in the case of the present terrible European war. We are not likely to be lost in a groundless mysticism, but we need to beware lest we be overcome by a crass materialism. The message of the Hindus with their insistent emphasis on the reality of the soul and God is vital for us in every department of our modern life. The philosophic world needs to heed this voice, the business world must be saved from a conscienceless commercialism, the social and industrial problem will never be solved without this element—yes, even the ecclesiastical world needs to be turned from its excessive emphasis on "movements," "campaigns," and "statistics" to its main business, the culture of the soul. We ought, therefore, to give heed to these words of truth from a recent address to the Japanese people by the famous Hindu poet and winner of the Nobel prize, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. He says:

"Yet this modern civilization, with all its mechanical devices for making life comfortable and progress rapid on the outside, has become itself a barrier in its turn with regard to the inner spirit of man, because it has made our life so intricate that it has lost its transparency of simplicity. Our things are more in evidence than ourselves. . . . Exhibition of man's nature has taken its place on the surface, where his richness is in his materials, his strength in his organization, his heroism in his ambitious undertakings, his mind in his science. Man's heart is squandering its strength in its craving for the dram-drinking of sensationalism—pitifully asking for its continual doses of fresh news and fresh noise—losing its healthy taste for food in its insatiable thirst for stimulants. . . . The men you meet here for the first time have the same signs of the push and pull of the rotating machine-wheels of the present age. They jostle you, they drag you on with the rush of the crowd, they rapidly take note of your exterior and offer their exteriors to be taken in snapshots. They have a curiosity for the superficial details, but no love for the real person. They are satisfied with the unessentials, because these can be gathered easily and got rid of as soon, these can be handled and soiled and swept away in the dust-bin with as little loss of time as possible. For everything must make room for the next ephemera, the shock of sensations has to be

carried on, and the men who have no time to lose must be amused in a hurry. They try to break chips off the permanent for making playthings for the temporary."[1]

From this quotation it is not only clear that the East has a message for the West, but that this characteristic emphasis on the supreme importance of the inner life must radically affect the type of Christianity that is to prevail with the coming years in India. By way of illustration of this blending of Oriental and Occidental philosophies we quote, this time from a Christian poet of India, Narayan Vaman Tilak:

> Not at all separate, but one, Jesus and I are one;
> One, like a musician's hand and his lyre;
> One, like thought and speech;
> One, like the nose and sweet odors;
> One, like mother and babe;
> One, like the guide and a misled wanderer;
> One, like life and body;
> One, like oil and the flame of a lamp;
> One, like rain and the lake it fills;
> One, like water and fish;
> One, like the sun and the day;
> Jesus and I are one, forever one.[2]

Here we have the daring mystical element so characteristic of India, but it is important to note that this poet is no pantheist, for he does not confuse Deity with humanity. The Jesus

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[1] The Literary Digest, July 29, 1916, pp. 251, 252 (reported from The Boston Transcript).

[2] "India's Christian Poet," by R. A. Hume, in World Outlook, September, 1916, p. 14.

of the poem is both transcendent and immanent, and, though the element of transcendence is still shadowy, its restraining influence upon the old Hindu identification of man and God is apparent. We may, then, expect in the course of the evangelization of India the growth of a Christianity in which our worthy doctrine of divine immanence will find its finest expression, and that therefore will make a most important contribution to the underlying theory and the common practice of the faith.

Bearing these and other like facts in mind, we turn now to the practical test and inquire how Hinduism has worked out in life. How has it measured up to the task of bettering human life both in its individual and social aspects? What contribution has it made toward the progress of civilization and the alleviation of human woe? This is the acid test, and by it every religion finally must be judged. Here, of course, the supercritic will raise the fundamental question as to the relative values of different standards of life, and will ask how we are to ascertain which is to have absolute validity. But this is one of those queries that present mainly endless logical possibilities and abstract refinements. We can only come back to life for its settlement, and must refuse to be lost in the mazes of fruitless argument. Does the Hindu system foster the larger opportunity for the development of mankind? Does it promote education? Does it bring

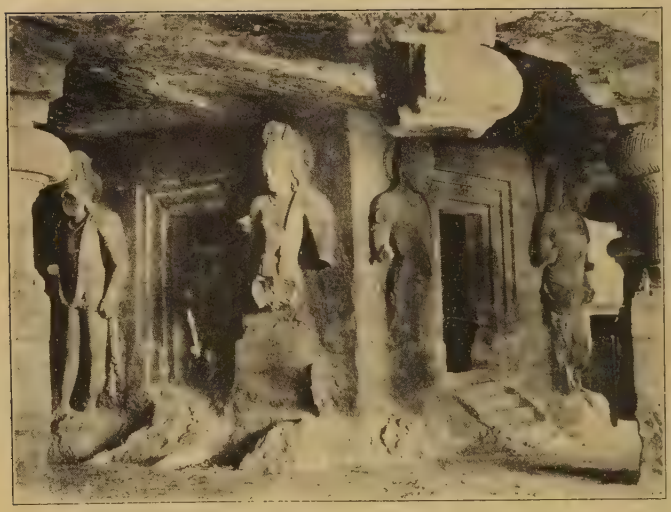
relief for social inequalities? Has it a remedy to propose for poverty and other evils, and does it apply the remedy with any measure of success? These and like questions constitute the real test, and the right answer to each is a negative one. In making such an assertion we have not forgotten that individual leaders here and there and some of the modern reform organizations have grappled with these issues, generally, however, under the goad of Christian teaching. The attempts at practical helpfulness of essential Hinduism, however, have not been attended except in a very few instances with any noteworthy success. In view, then, of these various considerations as to the worthy theoretical elements of the faith, and also of its decidedly limited success practically, we must approach a study of Hinduism with the closest sympathy for the mystical viewpoint, not forgetting, however, the claims of reason, ethics, and life itself.

A Multitude of Gods

One of the outstanding characteristics of this religion is its multitude of gods. There are approximately three hundred and fifty million people living in India who worship, it is said, some thirty million gods. No man could ever even catalogue the deities of Hinduism, for fundamentally the system is pantheistic, which means, therefore, that everything is a divine manifestation. From this conception to that of polytheism is but a step, and

in practice at least this step is taken, so that mountains, jungles, streams, earth, sea, and sky are teeming with gods. Images of these gods abound everywhere, but as to the real attitude of the worshipers toward their idols no one can afford to be dogmatic. Without doubt the common people largely believe that the image is the god himself. But some hold a somewhat higher conception and think of the idol simply as the temporary residence of the spirit of the god. The more intelligent Hindus, however, would contend that the idol is simply a reminder or a symbol of a deeper spiritual reality, and is to be used much as we use bread and wine in our sacrament of holy communion or water in Christian baptism. It is only fair, then, in connection with the classification of Hinduism as a polytheistic faith to quote the significant statement of one of its leaders to Professor James Bissett Pratt. He said: "As ten people observing a rose will see ten different things, each separating out that aspect of the rose which interests him most, so of God. You ask how many gods there are? There are in fact, subjectively considered, as many gods as worshipers.

"Each of us has his own God. But it is the one God who has these many forms. He has, in fact, an infinite number of forms because he is infinite. Each of *us* is a form of God. But some of us represent more of him than others do—just as the white light of a lamp shines through a clean and uncolored chimney better than through a clouded



THE LINGA CHAPEL—CAVES OF ELEPHANTA

A HINDU HOLY MAN

one."[3] Without disputing the truth reflected in this view, we may say that, as a matter of fact, the vast multitudes of Hindus do not thus closely analyze their subjective processes but regard their gods in straightforward fashion as objective realities.

There could be no better introduction to the Indian pantheon than that afforded by a visit to the famous Caves of Elephanta, located on an island in the bay about six miles from the city of Bombay. They constitute a Brahman rock temple some one hundred and thirty feet deep, provided especially for the worship of Shiva, one of the dominating gods of modern Hinduism. There is some dispute as to the actual age of these Caves, some holding that they date back five thousand years. Experts, however, point out that this assertion could hardly be true in view of the stage of religious development reflected in the huge carvings to be seen on the walls. More conservative scholars say that the excavations were made between A. D. 700 and 750. We were fortunate in having as our guide in a tour of these Caves the aged native custodian himself, who surprised us not only with his intimate knowledge of the meaning of the various images and of Hindu doctrine, but also by his statement that he himself was a Christian, converted years ago in Bombay under the preaching of William Taylor, who afterward became a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

[3] India and Its Faiths, by Professor James Bissett Pratt, p. 71.

On the wall just opposite the entrance to the Caves there stands a colossal image of the "Trimurti," or Hindu trinity. The figure is a three-faced bust. The center face with its mild expression represents the great god Brahma, the Creator, once the leading deity of the Indian pantheon, but now superseded largely in popular worship by other gods. On the left of Brahma is the face of Shiva, the Destroyer, the old Vedic storm god, who holds a very important place in modern Hinduism. Around one of his wrists is wound the sacred cobra, to signify that he is the protector of the animal world, while in the center of his forehead there is a third eye, representing spiritual insight. It is very difficult to characterize Shiva and the other gods of the Hindus, for their traits are nearly always loosely conceived and frequently interchangeable. However, we must understand that Shiva is a destroyer in the sense of destroying to renew, as does nature in the passing of the seasons. To the right of the Trimurti is the Linga Shrine, typifying most realistically this reproductive power of Shiva. In the midst of this shrine is the famous symbol representing the creative principle of life, about which there has been so much criticism. Doubtless in theory linga worship has no degrading implications, but in actual practice it can scarcely remain free from a sensualizing influence upon the people, as is evidenced by the indescribably obscene representations on some of the Hindu temples. Generally, near by the linga there is a kneeling

figure of Nandi, Shiva's bull, upon which he rides in his journeys up and down the earth. Near the entrance to the Caves at the left is a figure of Shiva in another aspect. Here he is an ascetic deep in meditation, thus objectifying the great mystical ideal of India. Just to the west of the Trimurti at the back of the Caves we find Shiva and his consort Parvati, or Kali. Over the head of Shiva in this instance there rises a three-headed female representing the three sacred rivers of India, the Ganges, the Jumna, and the Sarasvati. Kali seems to have absorbed most of the destructive qualities of her husband, for she is commonly represented in a most horrible form. At Kali Ghat, in Calcutta, we stood one day in the midst of a crowd of worshipers where there were numerous images of this fiendish deity, watching the priests slaughter goats in her honor until the very pavement became slippery with the blood of sacrifice. It is said that the late Professor Borden P. Bowne, witnessing this same frightful ceremony, desired immediately to leave India. The typical representation of Kali shows her in the very act of murder, a chain of skulls about her neck, and her tongue protruding to signify an unslacked thirst for blood. In one of her four hands she holds a man's head dripping with blood; just below another hand holds a basin to catch the blood; a third hand wields a bloody sword, while the fourth with a gesture points to a beheaded enemy near her right foot. Under her left foot

is another prostrate figure, the cobra wound around his arm. Kali is really the personification of nature in her terrible aspects, and this fact, together with the other fact that she is said to have a gentler side, may tend to temper our judgment as to this awful deity, but nevertheless the popular expression of Kali worship is filled with sickening horror.

The third face in the Trimurti of Elephanta represents Vishnu. In Vedic days he was the sun god, but with the passing of the centuries he has taken on many new characteristics so that now he is scarcely recognizable as one of the ancient deities. Vishnu is the Preserver, and rather more personal in his relation to his followers than Shiva, corresponds more nearly to the Christian idea of God than either of the other two members of the Hindu trinity. He is a god of love and grace, with none of the terrible aspects of Shiva or Kali, and stands for the great cosmic principle of the universe, man's Supreme Self. Of his incarnations in various earthly forms two are very important—his appearance as Krishna and Rama. Krishna was of lowly birth, but his life abounds in a multitude of heroic exploits, among which, for example, was his marriage to sixteen thousand wives. Legends also gather about his infancy and boyhood that forcibly remind one of the early days of Jesus Christ. The followers of Krishna worship are of two classes, one that emphasizes the nobler philosophic side of devotion, and the other

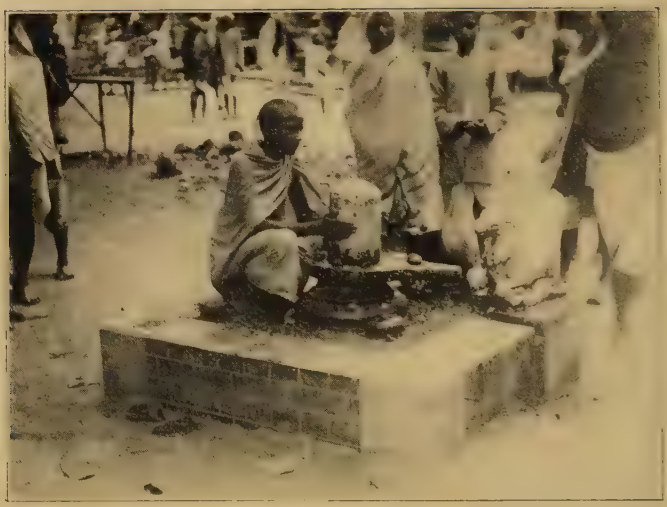
that exalts sensuality and the degrading elements of sex relationship. The story of the incarnation of Rama reads in parts almost like our gospel, and the whole trend of his life runs on a comparatively high plane. The tales of his life and adventures are gathered together in the Ramayana, which has become in a sense the Bible of millions of the common people.

Elsewhere in the Caves of Elephanta we find representation of other gods, among whom we mention Indra, the god of the firmament who ranked as king in the old Vedic pantheon. He rides on a celestial elephant, Airavati, out of whose trunk comes the rain that waters the earth. Near the Trimurti also is a representation of Arddhanari, a figure half male and half female. In still another group we find Ganesh, sometimes called Ganpati, the elephant-headed son of Shiva. He is the god of good luck and is constantly growing in popular favor throughout India. Hanuman is the monkey-headed god representing faithful friendship. He figures in the Ramayana and is also one of the most popular gods of the land. We might continue thus to enumerate and characterize the multitude of deities, their wives and sons and the hosts of minor incarnations, but the ones already mentioned constitute the major members of the Hindu pantheon. It is apparent even in so brief a review of these strange personalities that there are strong traces of animism in this faith and that most of the gods, in Vedic times at least, were

personifications of the phenomena of nature. Lofty moral ideals and definite ethical distinctions either are entirely absent or subordinated to the manifestations of power on the part of these beings, though, as we have seen in the cases of Rama and Hanuman, there are some hints at nobler things.

The Ceremony of Fire

But Hinduism is more than an interesting group of gods blindly worshiped, it is also a philosophy with more or less definite theories as to the meaning and purpose of life. Thousands of years ago in the age of the Vedas, the gods were comparatively few and the worship simple, although animism with the personification of nature's powers, magic, and myth had already begun to modify this early stage of development. But with the passing of the years upon this ancient polytheism was imposed an ever-deepening philosophic interpretation and ever-increasing domination by the Brahmans or priests. During this period, nearly a thousand years before the birth of Christ, the Brahmanas and Upanishads were added to the sacred Vedas to become a part of holy literature of India. The natures of the older gods were also modified and numerous new ones added to the list. In the year B.C. 563 the great teacher Gotama Buddha was born, and there began the great reform movement bearing his name. Jainism marked another revolt. These



A HINDU BOY BEFORE A LINGA SYMBOL

HINDU CHILDREN AT THE BIRTHPLACE OF KRISHNA

two movements are typical of numerous other attempts characterizing the last twenty-five hundred years to define and reform the ancient faith, until to-day, under the influence of Mohammedanism and Christianity, there is a decided tendency toward monotheism on the side of theory and toward social helpfulness and reform on the side of practice. During these long ages the subtle and peculiar beliefs of this country were gradually taking definite form and becoming the accepted faith and conviction of the common people, until in this present time Hindu mysticism is fully developed and marvelously controls the everyday life of India.

We cannot do better in a brief discussion of some of these doctrines than to describe the ceremony of fire on one of the sacred rivers. At Muttra every evening, rain or shine, just at sundown the people gather for this picturesque fire-worship on the banks of the sacred Jumna. Here homage is done to Krishna, and Jumna, the river god, in most solemn and spectacular fashion. On a January evening, accompanied by a native missionary and his children, we arrived at the Fire Ghat just in time to secure a raft on which we floated out on the river to an advantageous position from which to witness the weird ceremony. Along the river bank hundreds of people were busy launching miniature straw rafts, on each of which were several tiny dish lamps to light the souls of their departed relatives on the dark journey into eternity. The

sacred monkeys in multitudes were mingling with the people, jumping from roof to roof and chattering incessantly. Presently it began to grow dusk and the great bell was tolled to signify that the sun was sinking. A priest stripped to the waist took his place at the central altar under the canopy and raised in his two hands the vessel containing the fire, which began to burn vigorously. As the crowd shouted and the flames rose higher and higher, this priest began to sway back and forth to the rhythm of the strange "tum tum" of Oriental drums, and to lift the vessel of fire toward heaven. Then when the ceremony was at its height the worshipers threw their sacrifices of flowers into the flames, and cried out to the god to receive their gifts. The whole scene, the little lights floating down the dark river, the tolling bell, the fantastic music, the leaping flames and dancing shadows, the vari-colored garments of the worshipers all combine to make a never-to-be-forgotten impression on the memory.

And what had become of those dear ones to whom the worshipers were sending their messages of fire? Out of the All Soul they had come for a brief period of earthly existence and back again into the Eternal they had gone for a temporary rest after death. But the dead may not remain in the Beyond, for other long and oft-repeated journeys must be made back to earth in other forms that by the processes and experiences of mundane existence the soul at last shall be puri-

fied. Some spirits must be reincarnated as vermin or reptiles; others as monkeys or cattle; still others may come back to earth in some higher caste than the one in which they had previously lived. Something of the trying ordeal through which the soul must pass on this theory can be imagined when we realize how practically endless is this never-ceasing process. It is estimated that each being must pass through more than eight million forms ranging from the inorganic kingdom through the organic until the plane of human existence is reached and finally conquered. This is the great doctrine of Hinduism, the pantheistic belief in the transmigration of souls. Superficially considered such a teaching seems to be but the outcome of superstitious ignorance. However, a little sympathetic reflection must reveal its inner meaning. The Hindus here present us the Christian notion of education through struggle and the principle, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," greatly enlarged and extended. With them it applies not only to the three score years and ten of a limited individual life, but to the race as a whole in its age-long pilgrimage back to God. Of course the truth of the theory of transmigration and repeated reincarnations finds no good grounds within the sphere of human experience, for it does not appear that anyone ever retained a remembrance of what happened to him in previous incarnations, or that he ever profited thereby. Moreover, the Western mind would neither con-

sent to the view that earthly existence is essentially bad nor admit that the desires of life are the great hindrances to the growth of the soul, but the general viewpoint of life as a school is a common characteristic of both Christianity and Hinduism.

Karma is the term applied to the accumulated merits or demerits of our existence, and the "law of karma" simply means that our past existences inexorably determine the present stage of our development. So the great objective of human life is to get rid of karma and thereby attain to a condition wherein all desire is dead. Then in a state of utter selflessness the soul is prepared to cease its wanderings forever and merge once more into the timeless life of the Eternal.

Caste Distinctions

As the doctrine of transmigration works out in life we find that Indian society is separated into certain hard-and-fast divisions called castes. These castes represent the present stages of development of multitudes of human souls in the course of their journeys back to God. One cannot realize the potent influence of caste upon every phase of life until he has actually mingled with the people under its fatalistic sway. One day after a hard trip over the hot sands we arrived at the outskirts of a village where the people had crowded out to welcome our party. The entire population of the town belonged to the same caste, one of the lowest in the social scale. They were called cha-

mars, or leather-workers, and the employment of every man, woman, and child was the same. Now, what did this classification mean for the people of that village? It meant, first of all, that the membership of each person in this caste had been predetermined in some former existence, and that he was in exactly the place called for by his particular karma. It meant also that he never could expect to climb any higher in the social scale during his present earthly life. It furthermore meant that he could not contract marriage with a person of any other caste. Caste also fixed his employment as a leather-worker to the end of his days. There are other implications, some of a most depressing sort, that might be mentioned, but these facts are sufficient to show how helplessly and hopelessly the people of India, especially those of the lower castes, are bound by this iron custom.

As society is divided in this ancient land there are four major castes: the Brahmans, or priests, constituting the highest order; the Kshatriyas, including the warriors and rulers; the Vaisyas, the farmers and business men; and the Shudras, or servant class. Then, in addition to these, there is a fifth group called the outcastes, who are practically without standing in the world, though they number to-day more than fifty million. Numerous subdivisions of these various castes make it almost impossible to catalogue and characterize all the groups in the Indian society of to-day.

The lowest of all among the outcastes are scarcely as fortunate as the beasts of the fields, for they are spurned as untouchables, forced to act as slaves for the higher castes, and to subsist on carrion.

To break caste either by eating with a member of a lower order, or by failure to observe some other of the inflexible rules of this custom, is to invite disaster not only to one's spiritual but even to his material welfare. Thus there is no recourse from this ancient Brahman plan of life. We recently met a lady, a member of one of the leading Hindu families in Madras, who some years ago broke caste to become a Christian. So unusual was the procedure that the newspapers of the day were full of discussion regarding the matter, and on the day of her baptism vast crowds gathered around the church in which the service was held. Her parents denounced her and performed funeral rites just as if she had died. "The stars in their courses," however, militate against the caste system, for with the strenuous demands of modern business, the crowded railway carriages, the public restaurants, and other institutions of advancing civilization, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the high-caste Brahman not to touch those of lower castes, to eat his food only according to rule, and to observe the many detailed requirements of his religion. Missionary effort too is at last beginning to tell in the gradual modification of the system, for it is noticeable that, whereas in the

old days evangelistic activity could reach only the very lowest castes, to-day there is an upward movement of opportunity, so that Christian missionaries now are securing a hearing in castes a grade or two higher than these. Some authorities on the field predict that this is to be the program whereby at last the high-caste Brahman is to be reached. The nature of the mass-movement revivals now under way in portions of north and south India also seems to lend weight to this opinion.

A Marriage of Children

One of the gravest consequences of the caste system of India is child-marriage, which in thousands of instances has resulted in untold misery. Of late years reforms tending to raise the minimum age limit for the contracting parties has modified the evil, but even to-day these improved laws are constantly violated in the name of religion.

On one of our visitation trips in the native state of Baroda by accident we came across a wedding in one of the villages. The affair was at its height in an open space under several spreading trees, where, besides members of the immediate families concerned, numerous other relatives and friends had gathered to enjoy the festivities of the day. A professional poet standing in the midst was reciting a production of his own composition, much to the delight of his audience, judged by the

nodding of heads and the exchange of smiles. The bridegroom, a mere lad of twelve, was there also, evidently enjoying his position as the center of attraction. We were at once made welcome and took our places with the invited guests. The bride, however, was not to be seen anywhere, and in reply to our inquiries we were informed that she was a child of only four years and had been left at home. With fine Oriental consideration, however, the mother hastened away to secure the little maiden, that the visitors might pay the proper respects. Like the American bride, some time spent in dressing elapsed before she emerged, in her father's arms. She was an exceedingly shy child and scarcely knew what to make of the unusual proceedings, especially when she was asked to "look pleasant" during the taking of her photograph. Child-marriage is one of the most difficult problems of India, for there are said to be twelve million married and five hundred thousand widowed children between the ages of four and fourteen in the country to-day. It ought, however, in justice to be explained that child marriage really amounts merely to a betrothal, and that the children thus engaged return to their own homes and remain there until they reach their teens. Likewise it should be pointed out that the fearful consequences, as Indian society is now constituted, of the failure to "marry off" a girl during her childhood presents a most trying situation for those who would do away

A MAN OF THE SWEEPER CASTE

A CHILD BRIDE FOUR YEARS OF AGE

with this institution. And yet this custom violates one of the most sacred of Christian ideals. The solution of the problem is deeply involved with the whole question of caste, which in turn, as we have seen, roots in the central doctrine of Hinduism. It will probably, therefore, be many years before the institution of child-marriage finally will yield to the onward march of modern civilization.

The Holy City of India

Benares is Hinduism in miniature, for in this ancient city are to be found the best and the worst of the faith. During no one knows how many centuries it has been the goal toward which countless multitudes have bent their steps and other less fortunate millions have turned their hopes. It is the holy city of India, probably the most sacred spot in the empire. Here we meet some of the most learned priests and the most saintly ascetics. Here are splendid temples and elaborate bathing ghats. Here also strange rites and ceremonies find constant expression. It is not surprising, therefore, that a traveler reaches a state of almost hopeless mental bewilderment as he tries to visit the points of interest and understand the meaning of the ever-shifting scenes that pass before his eyes. In the famous Monkey Temple the doctrine of reincarnation is given concrete expression, for over its sacred walls climb a host of these animals, grinning, chattering, and quarrel-

ing. Let us walk softly, for these monkeys may be our own fathers or grandfathers. It is all very real, however, to that group of rather intelligent-looking pilgrims who have just arrived from some far away city. See that shrewd business man feeding one of the monkeys with the utmost reverence. To him transmigration and reincarnation do not constitute a mere theory, they are rather the most solemn facts of his existence. This temple is dedicated to the worship of Durga or Kali, and therefore, daily sacrifices of goats must be made to slake the thirst for blood of the dreadful image within. The whole ceremony is most nauseating, for the priests who kill the goat must smear their own faces with the warm blood ere they go into the presence of the goddess to pour the rest of it over her hideous figure. And yet one feels a sense of relief that goats are used to-day in this worship rather than little children, as was the case before the advent of British rule in India. Yonder on the bank of the Ganges is a little linga shrine, to which the bride who is to be married to-morrow must come and participate in a ceremony that would inexpressibly shock the uninitiated Westerner. Near by we stand at the edge of a great pool, or "tank," as they call it in India, and watch the devotees crowd down the steps to throw their offerings of milk and flowers into the sacred water and to submerge themselves under its filthy green scum. The sight is sickening, for surely the water has not been changed for

a year or more. And yet this is a veritable Bethesda for souls crippled by the sins of past months and years. These earnest worshipers tell us that the great god Shiva one day engaged in a very strenuous task in the heavens above until the perspiration fairly rolled from his body as the result of his terrific exertions. Fortunately, it fell in the Holy City and filled this tank, so that now men may find healing as they bathe themselves in the sweat of this favorite god of Benares. We wander on in the tangle of streets among the crowds of pilgrims until at last we reach one of the great temples. At the entrance some women are buying a little sacred water from a very unsanitary-looking well. Temple girls loaf in the doorway and produce the same sense of disillusionment as that experienced by Mark Twain in Paris in the case of the *grisettes*. There are fat, lazy-looking priests too, who seem for the most part to be simply enjoying life, though it is quite possible that we saw them between services. We round a corner and pass on straight into the idol market.

"What is the price of this little marble Hanuman?"

"Two rupees."

"Entirely too much."

So we cross over to the opposite shop and buy him, decorated in bright red and yellow, monkey face and all, for one rupee. We must have a Ganesh also, that good luck may attend our journeyings through India, and therefore we add

the elephant-headed god to our other purchase. Then in the mood of buying, we are induced by the urgent shopkeeper also to take one of the hundreds of lingas he has on exhibition. What a strange business! Idol factories are filled with busy workers in marble and brass turning out deities by the gross, while these eager Hindus, like Americans at a bargain sale, jostle each other in the crowded idol market to get a Shiva cheap. We visit other temples and shrines and interview some of the holy men, following the never-ending crowds of pilgrims, their foreheads freshly painted with the marks of their favorite god. Many of them have bathed already in the river and are carrying away little brass vessels of the precious Ganges water. Such is Benares, a great living panorama of popular Hinduism.

It was our experience one day while in this city to witness under very favorable circumstances a typical ceremony of this strange religion. In the company of a Mohammedan guide we made the slow trip down the Ganges, watching the unique panorama of bathing ghats, enormous sun-shades, temples, and groups of bathers, until our boat reached the famous Burning Ghat, where those of the Hindu faith are cremated. Several bodies were burning on the various pyres as we approached the place. Suddenly we heard a great commotion, the sound of the mourners in the streets accompanied by the din of wild music, and a crowd began to pour through yonder passage-

way from the street and down the bank to the ghat. It was an elaborate funeral procession, for we were to see the last rites of a high-caste Brahman, Dr. Tackhand, a well-known and greatly esteemed physician. Slowly the bearers made their way down the steps to the water's edge. Then came the ceremony of purification, when they plunged the body into the sacred waters of the river just at the prow of our boat. This accomplished, and the piece of gold placed by the physician's son in the mouth of the deceased, the attendants began to build the pyre and soon placed the body in position on the top of the pile of inflammable brush and wood. They then applied the torch. After the process of cremation was over, the charred remains and ashes were consigned to the ever-flowing waters of the Ganges, in which untold generations all through the centuries have passed out of human sight forever. Said my Mohammedan friend as the ceremony closed: "See that group of Mohammedans yonder. They abhor this heathen ceremony, but the doctor was so kind to them that they have overcome their prejudice and are present to-day to do him honor."

As we were about to leave the Burning Ghat there floated by within a few feet of our boat an unburned human body. Upon inquiry we were told that this man had died of smallpox and that among the Hindus this disease was considered to be one of the manifestations of fire. Therefore,

there was no need of further purification in this case, so the body simply had been thrown into the the waters of the Ganges to be lost at last in the boundless sea, even as the soul of the departed must ultimately be lost in the Eternal Soul of the World.

The Rise and Fall of Theosophy

In Benares not far from the banks of the Ganges is a building of unusual interest to European and American tourists. It is the Central Hindu College founded by Mrs. Annie Besant, one of the leaders of theosophy. The enrollment of this college numbers between two and three hundred students and the faculty is composed of both Hindus and Europeans. It represented in the days when theosophy was at the height of its popularity the great point of contact between Hinduism and that famous cult. In 1913, however, disgusted with the fraudulent character of this new teaching that had seemed to promise so much for the future of Hinduism, and because of practical disagreements, the native leaders broke away from foreign domination and the institution became an independent one. Just now the outlook for this college is quite auspicious, for a tract of land has been donated for the proposed new "Hindu University of Benares," and generous gifts have been received from prominent Hindus. Moreover, a bill has been introduced into the Viceroy's Legislative Council

whereby it will receive its charter from the government. The curriculum provides for both general education and specific instruction in Hinduism. Moreover, liberal conditions are laid down for the matriculation and training of those of other faiths in the essentials of their own religions. The general attitude of the faculty of the institution is favorable toward a broad interpretation of Hinduism, but decidedly unfavorable toward superstitious rites and customs, whether theosophic or Hindu. It is quite probable, therefore, that the reconstructed institution will make a valuable contribution toward the advancement of the people.

The rise and fall of theosophy in India constitutes a unique illustration of the gullibility of human nature, not only in the case of the overcredulous natives of that land, but also on the part of many apparently intelligent Europeans and Americans. The story of the movement is a long one, but the names of the leaders are very familiar. The Theosophical Society was founded in New York city in 1875, largely under the influence and control of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, a Russian woman with a mixed career and a foggy past. About 1878 she went to India with H. S. Olcott and began to elaborate her ambitious scheme of uniting the essential elements of all religions into one great faith. She published in the course of her lifetime a number of books expounding her mystical views,

among which may be mentioned Isis Unveiled, and The Secret Doctrine, in which, to put it mildly, she drew liberally from a multitude of printed sources without acknowledgment, and amplified what was lacking by large amounts of special revelation. With Olcott she taught that in far away Tibet there existed a Great White Brotherhood composed of men with complete insight into all truth. In this unknown region also had been accumulated a complete library of all the sacred writings of the world. From two of the great Masters of this Brotherhood especially she claimed to have received her theosophical system and also frequent messages and revelations. These were Mahatma Morya and Koot Hoomi. Under the circumstances, with Tibet a closed country, this yarn gave her unlimited freedom and authority in urging the claims of theosophy upon credulous natives and Europeans. However, there came a time when the bubble burst and her deluded followers received a well-authenticated special revelation on their own account. In 1884 and 1885 the Madras Christian College Magazine published an exposure of the fraudulent methods of the theosophists based upon forty genuine letters sent by Madame Blavatsky to Madame Coulomb. Later the London Society for Psychical Research took up the matter and carried the investigation still further. Meanwhile there were hysterical attempts to defend Madame Blavatsky and to

cover other evidences of fraud. However, in the end the whole scheme was laid bare by the publication of a complete plan of her shrine in Madras, where the strange manifestations of occultism took place. The Madras exposure sounded the death knell of theosophy so far as India was concerned. The real successor of Madame Blavatsky, who died in 1891, was Mrs. Anna Besant, who has lectured extensively in India and has sought to further the cause of Hindu education. However, her path has not been strewn with roses, for the career of Madame Blavatsky, numerous withdrawals from the Society in India and elsewhere, actual schisms within the organization, the Leadbeater case, serious quarrels, and other troubles have combined to bring her an inheritance of a deeply discouraging sort. In America to-day we know theosophy largely through the enterprise of Mrs. Katherine Tingley, who succeeded W. Q. Judge, the leader of the revolt against Olcott and Besant. She has her headquarters at Point Loma, California. Such in brief is the history of this modern brand of ancient Hinduism.

We cannot do better in summing up an estimate of the value of occultism and the influence of theosophy, from which the college at Benares is just now happily emerging, than to quote the words of an authority who has taken infinite pains to trace out and carefully weigh every detail of the stormy history of this cult. He says:

"Further, in spite of all its pretenses and all its noise, theosophy has made no contribution whatever to our knowledge of Oriental religions. It has not discovered a single fresh historical fact, nor brought a fresh text to the notice of scholars, nor produced a notable translation or commentary. Thousands of copies of Mrs. Besant's translation of the Gita have been sold; but no scholar would dream of referring to it for the translation of a difficult line. Apart from the writings of Mr. G. R. S. Mead, and one or two others, we must pronounce the whole vast literature of the Theosophical Societies worthless from the point of view of scientific knowledge. Where is there a single scholar, historian, or philosopher to be found among its members? One and all are repelled by the charlatanism of the literature. There is, last of all, the gross disservice it renders by filling the heads of its ordinary members with the cosmological and historical rubbish which is dumped in such heaps by the high priests of occultism at headquarters, and with the impudently worthless trash published in defense of superstitions which thoughtful Hindus would do anything to get rid of."[4]

Reform Movements

In contrast to this abortive attempt to impose occult teachings upon Hinduism from without

[4] Modern Religious Movements in India, by J. N. Farquhar, pp. 288, 289.

and thus to create a world religion, we find a number of significant efforts toward new interpretations originating within the faith itself. These are worthy of earnest consideration, both because of their manifest sincerity and on account of possibilities for good that seem to be wrapped up in them.

The traveler in India to-day is likely to inquire, as we did, regarding the denominational connection of certain modern churchlike structures to be seen on the main streets of some of the larger cities. The answer to his question would probably surprise him, for he would be told that these buildings do not belong to any of the foreign missionary organizations, but to one of the Samajes. And what are the Samajes? They are the reform organizations of Hinduism and are exercising considerable influence, not so much directly in the matter of enlisting large numbers, though the Arya Samaj has a very creditable following, but in creating a modern attitude toward superstitious rites and social evils. Of these various reform organizations the Brahma Samaj, now split into three different societies, and the Arya Samaj are the most prominent, and are representative of a host of other smaller groups. The aim of these reformers is the purification and defense of Hinduism and the foundation of a universal religion under the rallying cry, "Back to the Vedas." There can be not the slightest doubt that the influence

of Western education and ideals of government and the foreign missionary propaganda have been the strongest factors leading to the inauguration of these reform movements, though the more zealous leaders of the various organizations would be loath to admit these facts. They, rather, claim to find their theistic philosophy, noble ethical ideals, and high social standards all in the ancient literature of India, affirming that polytheism, idolatry, child-marriage, and like errors and abuses represent the degradation of pure Brahmanism. In order to understand this attitude one must allow not only for the natural pride of the Hindu on account of which he dislikes to admit the superiority of the West over the East, but also for the peculiar mental traits of the Oriental that relieve him of the inconvenient limitations of hard facts and logical consistency. Some of these modern leaders, encouraged doubtless by the theosophists, have been led to believe that their pantheistic philosophy is the solution to the world problem, and that only from India can come the salvation of humanity. Others even find in the dim and misty past of their country the beginnings of modern scientific knowledge, for we are told that these ancients "developed medicine, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, and many other sciences." The proof for such statements is not forthcoming, however, and they must be set down therefore as mere figments of the imagination.

In 1828 Ram Mohun Roy founded his theistic church called the Brahma Samaj in Calcutta. This man was a great traveler and a wide reader. Not only had he studied the Vedas, but also the Buddhist writings in Pali, and the Koran, besides the Old and New Testaments in the originals. His creed for this new monotheistic worship was a belief in the unity of God, and it is highly significant that he altogether abandoned the important Hindu doctrine of the transmigration of souls. His successor was Debendranath Tagore, the father of the famous poet, Rabindranath Tagore. During his administration a strenuous debate over the authority of the Vedas took place. Finally it was settled that they were not infallible, after a thorough investigation of the matter at Benares. The creed of the Brahma Samaj also was more closely defined and became less pantheistic in its character under this leadership, while belief in prayer, repentance, and faith in God as a heavenly Father represent some of the marked Christian tendencies of the epoch. But, although there was a very decided liberal tendency on the side of theory in the early history of the organization, and real efforts toward practical reform, still neither Roy nor Tagore could quite consent to the abandonment of the ancient custom of caste. In 1858, however, there arose a third leader by the name of Keshub Chunder Sen, who not only advocated the abolition of polytheism, idolatry, and child-marriages,

but also the caste system itself. Out of this radical departure there grew a split in the original organization and the liberals formed the "Brahma Samaj of India" as distinguished from the old or "Adi Samaj." Sen was of an impetuous nature and strongly committed to social reforms, meanwhile, at times, leaning strongly toward a full acceptance of Christian teachings. Indeed, in several instances in his Lectures in India he gives utterance to words of unsurpassed loyalty to Christ clearly understood by him to be the Son of God in the most orthodox sense. This humble attitude of worship, however, is offset in other cases by an assumption of his own equality with Christ. Thus he vacillated in his thinking and feeling from interest in the organization of the Brahma Samaj and practical activities in social service to an indefinable mystical communion, mingling the teachings of Hinduism and Christianity with his own moods. Perhaps the key to his strange disposition is to be found partly in the influence of Ramakrishna, the greatest of India's modern mystics. This devotee of Kali ran the whole gamut of mystical experiences, even through a period of wellnigh fatal asceticism. His aim was the attainment of a perfect love for God in the pursuit of which at times he actually lost consciousness. The life of the man is full of interest not only for its deep sincerity but also for the multitudinous methods he utilized that he might be delivered from the bondage of the

flesh. His biography is well summed up in his favorite phrase, "Not I, Not I, Thou, Thou." The mysticism of Ramakrishna, teaching the essential unity of all religions, spread rapidly not only in India but as far as Europe and America. In the United States a number of mission stations were established in large cities. Upon the death of the Master in 1886 the Order of Ramakrishna was organized and there began a vigorous missionary and social service campaign. Unfortunately, however, the simple spirit of its great leader has been largely lost and fraudulent swamis have commercialized the movement, furthering also its inherent tendencies toward ethical confusion and such abominable practices, for example, as guru-worship. Ramakrishna, then, in no small measure explains the struggles and the contradictions in the life of Keshub Chunder Sen. After Sen's death in 1884 there ensued considerable disintegration in this particular movement and no leader of commanding personality arose to take his place. There are to-day in India between one hundred and fifty and two hundred Brahma Samajes of various sorts united somewhat loosely in a central organization at Calcutta. Less than six thousand members are enrolled in these societies. In its present form and teaching it is best described as a kind of Indian Unitarianism.

The Arya Samaj is a product of Western India, founded in 1875 by a devout worshiper of Shiva

who was given the name of Dayanand Saraswati by his followers. The order is far more conservative than the Brahma Samaj and less inclined to push social reforms, though the leaders recognize the evils of Hinduism. They contend for the infallibility of the Vedas and uphold the doctrine by ingenuous methods of symbolism and a liberal use of the imagination. However, the theology of the Arya Samaj is uncompromisingly monotheistic and its ethical theories most wholesome, though its founder clung persistently to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls and asserted that the forgiveness of sins was an impossibility. Also, while the Arya Samaj is not radical enough to declare openly against caste as does the Brahma Samaj, great liberties are taken with the custom by the encouragement of intermarriage among the different castes. In relation to the work of Christian missionaries the organization fosters bitter opposition, a logical attitude, in view of its aggressive defense of ancient Hinduism, and on this account the leaders frequently offer Christian converts reinstatement, or even promotion to a higher caste, provided they recant and once more embrace the old faith. In 1878 Dayanand came into touch with Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, with the result that a union of the Theosophical Society and the Arya Samaj was effected, but the new arrangement lasted only a few years. Recently several worthy educational enterprises have been fostered by the

organization notably at Lahore, Hardwar, and Jullundur. Likewise there have been some experiments along evangelistic lines patterned after Christian missionary methods. A very distinct growth in numbers has marked the progress of the Arya Samaj during the last two decades, so that to-day they report about two hundred and fifty thousand followers.

The future of the reform organizations of India, however, is still problematical. No less an authority than Rabindranath Tagore, himself the best product of the Brahma Samaj movement, of which his father was such a worthy leader, is thus reported by J. N. Farquhar: "He expects, he said to me a few months ago, that the regeneration of India will come through gradual change within the body of Hinduism itself rather than from the action of any detached society like the Brahma Samaj."[5] With this opinion, of course, there would be profound disagreement on the part of other leaders of the various Samajes. But whatever may be the developments of these societies with the coming years, one fact stands out now, that they are beginning to tell for the betterment of India. They are helping to create a new sense of independence and nationalism. Indeed, in numerous instances overzealous agitations on the part of some of these leaders along the lines of social justice have led even to misunderstand-

[5] Modern Religious Movements in India, by J. N. Farquhar, p. 384.

ings with the government. Moreover, their influence is helping to break down the caste system and is causing the better-class educated Hindu to grow just a little ashamed of such religious debauches as one can witness for example every day at Benares or Kali Ghat in Calcutta.

There can be no doubt that the recent change in attitude toward religious problems in India as represented by these new movements is mainly the result of the Christianizing efforts of the past decades. It is true, of course, that other elements have entered into this awakening of India to her dire condition and need. Such are the closer contact with the outside world through commercial relationships, new educational opportunities, etc. The great leaven, however, is Jesus Christ as he is set forth in the great missionary endeavor of the Christian Church. More real "results" are to be found involved in these reforms thus stimulated than in even the tabulated reports of mission boards and the direct victories of the cross as related by returned missionaries, for these movements are unmistakably headed in the direction of Christian teaching, and no power on earth can stop them. Thus by a process of indirection the very presence and work of Christian teachers, physicians, and evangelists is constituting a guarantee that the India of tomorrow will be a Christian India. That this is not simply a prejudiced optimism is borne out by the hard fact that the rate of increase in

converts for Hinduism during the twenty years 1896–1916 was less than five per cent, while that for Christianity during the same period was nearly seventy per cent.[6] This would seem to show that India is really turning to Christ as her highest hope.

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[6] Statistics from Statesman's Year-Books 1896–1916.

CHAPTER IV
UNDER THE BO-TREE

Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves.—
Gotama Buddha.

CHAPTER IV

UNDER THE BO-TREE

When Prince Siddhattho, that is, Gotama Buddha, was born, five hundred and sixty-three years before Christ, his father, King Suddhodano, called a conference of priests and astrologers to forecast the boy's future. After much deliberation they asserted that the prince would make a great success in life either as a world-ruler or as a supreme buddha, depending upon whether he should choose a worldly career or the life of an ascetic. The king upon receiving this information was much concerned lest his son should withdraw from the world and become a monk, for he was exceedingly ambitious that Siddhattho should attain to a great earthly kingship. Because of this apprehension, therefore, King Suddhodano took every precaution to bar from the sight of the young prince every evidence of the vanity of life, such as pain, disease, and death, and to surround him with every kind of earthly pleasure. Three palaces were built for him and landscape gardeners were employed to lay out wonderful gardens with stately trees, flowing brooks, and beds of lotus blossoms. Also a harem of beautiful girls and bands of musicians and dancers were provided, that the life of the young man might become one

long, sweet song. Under this environment Siddhattho grew to manhood, and never once even dreamed of the sad, dark facts of human existence. But one day he was out driving in his garden when suddenly he came upon a most unusual sight. It was an old man, bent and broken by the weight of years. His face was wrinkled, most of his teeth were gone, and his head was nearly bald, only a fringe of snow-white hairs remaining. Moreover he was so weak with advancing age that he was just able to hobble along with the aid of a stick. Struck with the strange apparition, the young man cried, "What is this?" In answer to the question he heard for the first time the tragic story of old age, for he was told that the poor, bent figure was that of a man who had lost the vigor and freshness of youth, and now in his state of helpless dotage had been abandoned by neighbors and friends. At first Siddhattho thought that this must be an isolated case, and the cruel treatment peculiar to some one family. However, the charioteer quickly informed him that the old man represented the working of a common law of life, and that every youth must come finally to this dreadful state. Saddened to his soul by this hard fact, the prince returned to his palace and refused for some time to be comforted.

A little later, however, a second excursion was planned, and once more the prince drove down the road in his chariot only to come upon a sight, if anything, worse than the first one. This time it

was a sick man covered from head to foot with loathsome ulcers. There he lay beside the road in a bed of filth unable to help himself and without a friend to assist him. Already the shadow of death was creeping over his poor, weak body. Upon being told that this was sickness, and that it might come to anyone, rich or poor, no matter what his circumstances in life, the heart of the prince grew heavier than ever, and again he hastened home to nurse the new wound that the awful realism of life had given him.

Some days later, in spite of this growing pessimism, a third trip was made. The royal party proceeded out through the western gate of the garden, but before they had gone far a funeral procession crossed their path and they had to come to a halt. The corpse wound in a sheet, the noisy mourners, and the weird music of drum and fife amazed the prince. "What is this?" he once more inquired. "This is death," came the terrible answer. Even then the young man could not understand, and so it was further explained that the corpse lying there silent and white would never walk again, would never speak again, and that it could not even hear the cries of the dear father, mother, wife, and children. Upon hearing this, Siddhattho exclaimed in bitter anguish: "Woe be to youth, which is the sport of age! Woe be to health, the plaything of many sicknesses! Woe be to life, which is as a breath! Woe be to empty pleasures which ruin mankind!"

On a fourth trip, however, the prince found a clue to the solution of the problem of life. Upon this occasion, in spite of the extra guards placed everywhere by the king as a precaution against these awful sights that were so strongly influencing his son, the young man suddenly came upon a monk carrying a beggar's bowl in his hand. His garments were scant and coarse and there was nothing about him to indicate any love of earthly splendor. But his face was calm, gentle, peaceful. "What is this?" again questioned the prince. "Ah, this," said the charioteer, "is the New Life." And when he was told furthermore that the Brahman ascetic had fixed his thoughts on divine things and had utterly annihilated the desires of the flesh, Siddhattho himself determined to follow his example and discover if possible his wonderful secret. Such is the story that led to the enlightenment of Gotama Buddha. Whether all this actually happened, or whether the tale is simply a symbolization of the thought processes by which the Great Teacher came to his knowledge of the truth, makes but little difference. In either case it presents the great problem of evil for which Buddha offered his solution.

Tradition goes on to tell of the frantic efforts of King Suddhodano to thwart the purposes of his son. He invented new pleasures for the prince and multiplied the guards about the palace; but the song of Ecclesiastes, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," had saturated the soul of Gotama, and one dark

night he slipped stealthily away to follow the path of the Brahman ascetic. At first he joined himself to one of the religious teachers of Brahmanism, hoping to find help in the classic faith of India, but during these years very little light breaks into his dark despair, although he gives himself over to the most rigorous ascetic practices. He resolves, therefore, to work out his own salvation and chooses the famous bo-tree at Gaya as a place to meditate upon the meaning of life, where he wages a mighty struggle with his insistent desires and the fundamental "will to live." Gaya, or, rather, Buddh Gaya, about a hundred miles from Benares, is one of the most sacred spots in India. Here the traveler of to-day may visit the scenes of Gotama's mighty soul struggle, and the very spot where one of the world's greatest religions was born. The original temple at this place, closely connected with numerous events in Buddha's life, was built in B. C. 543, and the present structure is said to contain the oldest sculptures in all India. Behind this temple on an elevated platform is a bo-tree on the spot where the original bo-tree grew under which Buddha sat during the meditations that resulted in this great Oriental religious movement. Numerous images of the Teacher himself also are to be seen in Buddh Gaya. In spite of the temptations of Mara, the Buddhist Satan, who came to Gotama here at Gaya with the appeal of hunger, of ambition, and of sensuality to turn him from the path of truth, he finally emerges victorious

from his long meditations, and leaves the bo-tree to go forth with a definite remedy for the ills of human life and a complete system of knowledge which has also been called, in striking similarity to our own gospel, "The Glad Tidings."

The Famous Sermon at Benares

Buddha's ministry began in the holy city of Benares, where he preached his first sermon to a handful of half-credulous ascetics who knew him in his old Brahman days. They had given him up for lost when he left their ranks and had classed him as a heretic, so the congregation on that memorable day at first must have been far from sympathetic. The preacher, however, by the sheer power of his calm, dignified personality arrested their attention and soon they began to listen closely to his discussion of "The Foundation of the Realm of Eternal Justice," into which the new prophet poured all the conclusions of his earnest struggles with the problem of life and his bo-tree meditations. He outlined at the start the Four Great Truths. The first was the universality of human suffering, or the inherent evil of existence. Under this head Buddha pointed out with multiplied illustrations that from the cradle to the grave mankind is literally beset with sufferings of every kind, including disappointments, misfortune, sickness, and death. The second truth indicates the cause of suffering, and this Gotama finds not in anything external but in the desires

A CHINESE BUDDHIST PRIEST

THE WHEEL OF EXISTENCE

of the soul itself, and fundamentally in the "will to live"; that is, in the craving for existence. This constant seeking for a continuation of life results in an endless chain of reincarnations which can be broken only when desire is at last extinguished. This drastic remedy is Buddha's third truth. The fourth relates to the method of attainment of Nirvana, a state wherein there is left no "will to live," and shows that this condition can be reached only as one follows strictly the sublime path of Buddhism.

Upon this fourfold philosophic foundation, then, the preacher began to build his practical teaching, which he called the Eightfold Path, in contrast to the ruinous Twofold Path that leads to destruction. If, said he, a man follow the path of striving to satisfy his desires and passions in a round of empty pleasures, there is no hope for him. Neither is there any salvation in the opposite of this, in fasting, self-torture, and asceticism. "No; walk in the Eightfold Path and be saved!" is the cry of the preacher of Gaya. And what was Buddha's Eightfold Path? The first part is *right knowledge*, embracing a correct understanding of the misery of life. "And what, O ascetics, is right knowledge? The knowledge of misery, O ascetics, the knowledge of the origin of misery (craving for selfhood), the knowledge of the cessation of misery (the Eightfold Path)—this, O ascetics, is called right knowledge." *Right aspirations* come next and grow out of right knowledge. These consist in earnest craving for

renunciation and a state of love for all mankind. The third part of the path is called *right speech*, and emphasizes guarding the tongue, for "the future life of a man depends on his words." Then comes *right conduct* with a strong negative aspect, but also with a worthy positive teaching. The disciple must curb the desires of his senses, especially lust and anger. He is also exhorted to preach the doctrine of Buddhism for the benefit and welfare of mankind. In *right living* occupations hurtful to one's fellow men or to the lives of animals are forbidden, also those vocations lending themselves easily to dishonesty and unfairness are denounced. *Right effort* enforces the need of great resolution both to overcome evil and to do good, not by ascetic practices, but by the sheer force of the mind bending to its strenuous task. The seventh division of the Eightfold Path is named *right thinking*. Here Buddha emphasizes the fact that the mind is responsible for evil thoughts and so of evil motives and acts. Therefore the mind must be trained in the right way, if we are to secure final deliverance. The last of the Eightfold Path is *right meditation*, wherein a right state of mind is attained and reason, singleness of purpose, love and joy reign supreme. This final state is not to be described as ecstasy in the common mystical sense, but as a condition of calm realization of truth.

This sermon, then, is the essence of Buddhism and represents the original contribution of its

founder. However, there are other elements and doctrines woven into the system besides the Four Great Truths and the Eightfold Path. We must remember that Buddhism was a reform, a protest against Brahmanism, much like the movement of Martin Luther in the history of our own faith. Hence, as we might expect, there were preserved some of the ancient doctrines of India in the new order. The most important of these was that of the transmigration of souls, which Gotama accepted bodily, with this exception, however, that while the Brahmans taught the reincarnation of souls, he asserted that there was no such entity as a soul, and, therefore, only the craving or disposition of the life passed over into the new incarnations. His own personality too constituted no small element in the shaping of Buddhism, for besides possessing a great mind the Master also had a great heart and sincerely loved his fellow men. Therefore this otherwise seemingly coldly rationalistic system took on the warmth of life as he sent forth his disciples to teach mankind the way of deliverance from the ills of existence.

The success of the great reform, moreover, was vitally furthered by the enlistment of Asoka, the king of Behar, who reigned about B. C. 250. He became thoroughly converted to the truth of Gotama's teachings and most zealously gave himself to the work of promoting them. It is said that he personally supported sixty-four thousand priests, and besides gave Buddhism the elements

of organization and clear doctrinal definition. Under his supervision also a commission was appointed to guard the purity of the faith and another, to revise the canon. The missionary propaganda too had its first large development during this period. The disciples of Buddha carried the new enlightenment to Ceylon about B. C. 300, to Burma probably as early as B. C. 207, and to China some time during the second century before Christ. Dating from this period, the faith constantly spread over the whole of the far East, to Korea in A. D. 372, to Japan in 552, to Siam in 638, and to Java in the fifth or sixth centuries. But while Buddhism was thus enlarging its borders abroad a serious decline ensued in India, the land of its birth, until to-day we find it represented only in a few small sections on the northern boundaries of the empire. It is said, however, by Buddhist leaders that the followers of the Teacher now number five hundred million, a figure well illustrating the Oriental habit of exaggeration, for on a liberal estimate there cannot be more than a hundred and fifty million of them. Moreover, literally millions of these Buddhists have no comprehension whatever of its essential teachings and are hopelessly illiterate. This purely nominal connection of vast multitudes with the faith should, of course, be taken into account in any comparison of the numerical strength of the different religions of the world.

Gotama Buddha began his public ministry at the

age of thirty-six and spent forty-four years traveling from place to place preaching his gospel. It is now pretty clearly established that he died at Kusinagara, a place not yet fully identified, near his birthplace at Pikrawa. One authority has fixed the date of his death very definitely as October 13th, B. C. 483, but this, of course, may be open to question. It is significant that neither he nor the great leaders of Buddhism since his death have ever claimed that he was more than a man. It is taught, however, that he succeeded in reaching his ideal in the attainment of complete enlightenment. In the course of human history innumerable Buddhas have been born, twenty-four of whom have been definitely named. Gotama is the last of these, but prophecy says there are to be others, among whom a very great teacher is to arise who will lead the world still further into the light. As a fitting close to this very brief sketch of his life we quote the Teacher's dying words, which constitute a most worthy exhortation to all mankind:

"Be earnest, be thoughtful, be holy. Keep steadfast watch over your own hearts. He who holds fast to law and discipline and faints not, he shall cross the ocean of life and make an end of sorrow."

A Feast of the Full Moon

Our first introduction to Buddhism was in Ceylon. Here we visited, at Kandy, the famous

Temple of the Tooth, so called because the shrine within is said to have contained a tooth of the Great Teacher. The original tooth, however, was destroyed by the Portuguese Catholics and later replaced with a tusk some two inches in length. This substitution, however, does not seem to affect the zeal of the worshipers, for they still speak of the tusk as the tooth of Buddha. Probably the majority of the pilgrims are not even aware that the original tooth ever was destroyed. By a fortunate coincidence we reached Kandy in time for a great religious gathering—the Feast of the Full Moon. Thousands of pilgrims had arrived from great distances, some even from faraway Burma, to attend this festival, and to see the tooth. The temple is most picturesquely situated on the banks of a beautiful artificial lake with a vine-clad hillside in the background. Here at the gate and on the steps leading up to the main doorway we found a motley collection of beggars, "the maimed, the halt, and the blind," men, women, and children, each earnestly entreating the incoming worshipers for alms. Nor were they unsuccessful in their solicitations, for the Buddhists are very charitably inclined and were giving small money or handfuls of rice to these miserable creatures. In addition to the beggars there were numerous dealers in trinkets, and books on the Buddhist religion, driving bargains with individuals who paused for a moment at the main gate. One of the first sights to attract the atten-

tion within the outer inclosure of the temple is the sacred pond, in which hundreds of turtles wait to be fed. Some of these are very old, for it is a crime to kill or injure one of them. They were also well cared for, because of their unique character as sacred beings. Near the pond, on the outer walls of the temple proper, is to be seen a series of ancient paintings on the punishments of hell. The artist has treated his subjects in a most realistic, lurid fashion and yet it is apparent that an effort had been made to show in the case of these various representations how the punishment grows naturally out of the sin. Thus it is possible even for a foreigner to discover from each picture the sin that belongs with that particular kind of punishment. Here one sees depicted the dreadful torment of the cheat, the adulterer, the liar, and the murderer.

Of course we were anxious to visit the Shrine of the Tooth, and joined the suffocating crowd that was making its way tediously up the steps to the top of the temple. Frequently the throng would pause to cry in unison a kind of "Amen." Nearly every worshiper carried a tray of heavy-scented blossoms as an offering. Finally we reached the very door of the shrine, where we were halted until we had removed our shoes. This done, we surged with the crowd into the dimly lighted room, where two priests showed the golden receptacle in which the sacred tooth reposes, and received the generous offerings of money and flowers from

the earnest pilgrims who bowed and prayed before it in a most idolatrous fashion. The casket, however, is very rarely opened, for only when there is a special need for money or upon the occasion of a royal visit is the tooth exposed to view.

In the tower of this temple there is a fine library of Buddhist books. The priest in charge showed us the three Pitakas in the original Pali, bound in a most elaborate and costly style with inlaid covers decorated with precious jewels. The pages of the Pitakas are about two feet by two inches in size, for the three volumes are made of the leaves of a peculiar species of palm that flourishes in Ceylon. From another volume of the Pitakas we were given a half dozen of these leaves as souvenirs of our visit to this famous library. The three Pitakas (baskets) contain the law and the gospel of Buddhism, for in them are recorded the sayings of the Master and the best teachings of the faith. One of these Pitakas is called the Sutta Pitaka, and contains the sermons and addresses of Buddha himself, as well as numerous parables and sayings from his lips intended to illustrate and enforce the various doctrines of the faith. Another, the Vinaya Pitaka, is a collection of laws and rules for the guidance of those who renounce the world entirely and take the exacting ten vows of Buddhism in contrast to those of a lower order who are required to take only five. The third volume of the Pitakas, known as the Abidhamma Pitaka, is a

comparatively modern production embodying psychological and philosophical treatises intended for the use of scholars.

Suppose we open this last volume and read from one of its dry, yellow leaves. The author is discussing the control of sense impressions and says: "What is it to have the doors of the faculties guarded? When a certain individual sees an object with the eye he is not entranced with the general appearance or the details of it. He sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for wicked states, covetous, dejected, to flow in over him, were he to dwell unrestrained as to the sense of sight. He keeps watch over this faculty of sight and attains to mastery over it. And so in like manner when he hears a sound with the ear, . . . smells an odor with the nose, . . . tastes a sapid with the tongue, . . . feels a tangible with the body, . . . recognizes an idea with the mind, he is not entranced with the general appearance and the details of it. He sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for wicked states, covetous, dejected, to flow over him, were he to dwell unrestrained as to the mental faculty. He keeps watch over the mental faculty and attains to mastery over it. That these six faculties should thus be guarded, tended, watched over, restrained is what is called having the doors of the faculties guarded."[1] This is

[1] From A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics. Translation of the Abhidhamma Pitaka from the original Pali, by Caroline Rhys Davids.

typical Buddhism, and good psychology as far as it goes, but there is an entire absence of the positive note, quite a general characteristic of the teachings of the faith, for we turn over other leaves and read in the same strain, "What is moral progress? Absence of excess in deed, in word and in deed and word together."[2] However, in fairness we must note an occasional reference like the following which points toward the principle of overcoming evil with good: "What is friendship with good? To follow after, frequent the company of and associate with, such persons as are believers, virtuous, well educated, generous, and intellectual, to resort to and consort with them, to be devoted to them, enthusiastic about them, mixed up with them."[3]

On still another one of these palm leaves we get a vivid revelation of the contempt in which Buddhist scholars hold our Occidental tendency to seek philosophic explanation. Incidentally also we get once more a typical Buddhist view of the limitations of human knowledge. "What is the grasping after speculative opinion? There is no such thing as alms, or sacrifice, or offering; there is neither fruit nor result of good, or of evil deeds; there is no such thing as this world or the next; there is no such thing as mother or father or beings springing into birth without them;

[2] From A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics. Translation of the Abhidhamma Pitaka from the original Pali, by Caroline Rhys Davids.

[3] Ibid.

there are in the world no recluses or brahmans who have reached the highest point, who have attained the height, who, having understood and realized by themselves alone both this world and the next, make known the same—all this sort of speculation, this walking in opinion, scuffling of opinion, this fetter of opinion, the grip and tenacity of it, the inclination toward it, the being infected by it, this bypath, wrong road, wrongness, this 'fording place,' this shiftiness of grasp—this is what is called grasping after speculative opinion."[4]

In keeping with the attitude reflected in this last quotation, the Three Pitakas are not regarded as containing in any sense special revelations of truth. Therefore there is no appeal to their authority as the infallible guide of life. The teachings carefully gathered and edited are offered simply for what they are worth as judged by individual reason and conscience. In addition to the Pitakas there is a large body of writings, consisting of stories, commentaries, and philosophic essays, that also go to form a part of the sacred literature of Buddhism and upon which its practical teachings are based. Copies of most of these important books are to be found in the splendid library in the tower of the Temple of the Tooth, and others are being added as fast as the funds, collected by popular subscriptions, increase.

[4] Ibid.

Two Interesting Conversations

The climax of the ceremonies in connection with the Feast of the Full Moon came in the evening, when a special service was held in an open building in the temple ground. With the thousands of little candles burning before the numerous shrines, the ceaseless beating of the drum, the hundreds of worshipers praying before the various images of Buddha, and the light of the clear, full moon bathing the whole scene in a matchless splendor, the setting was indeed exceptional for a study of this great faith as it is actually practiced by the people. As we stood watching the scene under a spreading bo-tree near an image of Buddha in meditation, a young lawyer, who had a good mastery of English, engaged us in conversation. This earnest Buddhist had read widely, and, unlike the crowds moving past us, could give some reasons for the faith that was in him.

After he had explained the underlying philosophy of Buddhism and some of its peculiar doctrines, we inquired, "What is Nirvana?" "Nirvana," said he, "is the scent in the clothes-press after the camphor has been removed." His quaint reply gives one a good idea of the intangible nature of the doctrine, for while Buddhist scholars would not be willing to admit that Nirvana was a state of complete annihilation, yet they could scarcely argue that there was any element of consciousness worthy of the name in

connection with this ideal condition toward which they so earnestly strive. Another incident in the course of this discussion reveals, however, the cruder view of the common people. An old man made his way to the bo-tree where we were standing, and, breaking into the conversation, inquired of the lawyer, "What is this young man saying?" The lawyer replied, "He says he believes that each of us is an eternal soul, and that after death this soul still lives in an immortal state." "What nonsense!" exclaimed the venerable Buddhist. "Tell him to go over to yonder candle and blow out the flame. So it is with human life when death comes."

Presently the conversation turned to the world-old problem of permanence and change, the lawyer contending for a causeless beginning of things, though, like other thinkers of his type, he was soon lost in the "endless regress" from which he was unable to disengage himself. We talked also of the ethical teachings of Buddha and of the moral life of the people. Here he confessed that for some reason or other his faith did not grip the souls of men for right living as it should. However, it ought to be said in justice that the Buddhists have developed the virtue of kindliness and charity to a remarkable degree. Moreover, strange as it may appear, there are no people anywhere so happy in disposition and so optimistic in outlook as the Burmese Buddhists, who, according to their own doctrine, expect prac-

tical extinction as the final goal of their long series of existences. There may, however, be other explanations than this effort to extinguish desire responsible for their cheerfulness. In the wealthy land of Burma most of the people have a fair share of the good things of life, and careful observation would also show that the common people, and the majority of the priests, do not get very far beyond the mere routine of ceremonial practices in their religion; so it may be that this strange optimism has grown to some extent out of the very comforts of life and their actual ignorance of the real implications of Buddhist teachings. Still, after all, we find this same carefree cheerfulness among the poor Tibetans and the intelligent Japanese, a fact which may indicate that the optimism of the Buddhists has some strange connection with their doctrine.

Speaking of Christianity, my friend confessed that the unique character of Jesus Christ commanded his respect and expressed deep reverence for his life and teachings as set forth in the Gospels. Of the missionary enterprise of the Christian Church he was inclined to be rather critical, affirming that the missionaries for the most part did not appear able, or were at least unwilling, to study the teachings of any religion but their own. He also thought that they manifested much intolerance and lack of sympathy with those whom they looked upon as "heathen." The conversation finally closed about midnight

when the lawyer said: "Come again to-morrow. The great master-priest will be here then and he will explain all things to you."

The next morning we heard from another intelligent disciple of Gotama here in Kandy the story of the modern awakening in Buddhism. He mentioned the evangelistic zeal and missionary enthusiasm that to-day marks a new epoch in the faith, and said that a kind of evangelistic commission had been organized to secure fresh converts. In this connection he pointed with pride to some Americans who had become followers of Buddha. Of even more significance was his description of the educational movement among the Buddhists of Ceylon. Hundreds of vernacular schools and many higher schools with instruction in English have been established for the boys of this island, but in all these institutions the training is carefully shaped toward a defense of the old faith and a zealous cultivation of things Oriental. Nor is this all, for there is the beginning of another educational movement of a specifically religious character intended to ground the young life of Ceylon in the principles of the faith and thus to prevent, if possible, further deflections to Christianity. In the temple grounds in the midst of the crowds prostrating themselves before the numerous images of Buddha we discussed the Buddhist Sunday school movement and learned from this native that not only have a number of such schools already been es-

tablished in the island, but also that the modern principles of gradation have been adopted and courses planned in the stories, symbols, and doctrines of the faith. In Japan likewise the spirit of reform has turned toward plans for holding the coming generation. A reliable authority[5] states that the Nishi Hong-wanji, one of the sects of Buddhism, has a regularly organized Sunday School Board, and that aggressive efforts in behalf of childhood were begun at the time of the emperor's coronation in 1915. Within six months eight hundred Buddhist Sunday schools were organized. Moreover, Christian Sunday school literature is imitated and Christian songs modified and adapted for the use of these schools by the zealous leaders of the Nishi Hong-wanji. After our informant at the Temple of the Tooth had talked for some time of these and other modern activities, we asked how he accounted for these recent changes. His answer was typically Oriental—Buddha himself had prophesied this taking on of new life and interest. Lurking in the recesses of our mind, however, was a strong suspicion that the progress of Christian missions, as well as the prophecies of Buddha, may have had something to do with the matter.

Two Remarkable Images

Just outside the town of Pegu in Burma is the largest reclining image of Buddha in the world.

[5] The Rev. K. Mito, Kobe, Japan.

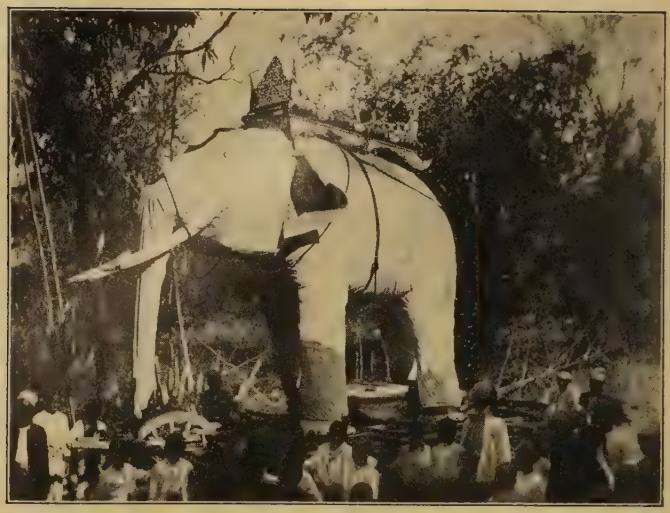
For years this image was lost in the jungle, but not long since it was discovered, and the British government promised that if the Buddhists would restore the image the property should be sacredly protected. This was done, and to-day thousands of visitors from all parts of the world marvel at the colossal figure decorated with fine gold leaf and gorgeous inlay work. This Buddha is one hundred and eighty-one feet in length, and represents the Master with his head on a pillow and an expression of active satisfaction—which does not seem to reveal the extinction of all desire—on his face. On either side of the gateway leading to the immense shed that covers this reclining Buddha are two monster guardian dragons. The one on the right has no tongue, while the one on the left possesses this member intact. The ready explanation of the natives is simple, the right hand figure is the male, while the other is a female!

Some distance from this figure, in a neglected spot, is another remarkable image, the only one of its kind in the world. Here we have the figure of the Dead Buddha. Tradition says that Gotama died from the effects of eating pork curry, because he did not have the heart to refuse the dish when a brother priest offered it to him, although he knew that he ought not to partake of it. This last episode in the life of the Teacher is portrayed out here in the jungle by means of a series of groups, the climax of which is the Dead

Buddha. In the first group we see a green figure of Mara (Satan) tempting him to eat the curry. Then there is a group of astrologers talking the matter over. Another group shows a close friend returning to the sick bed with a vessel of water. Lastly there is the prostrate figure of the Teacher as he lies dead in the midst of a group of adoring followers. The physician is sitting there too, with a far-away look in his eyes. We asked what he was doing, and our priest-guide replied, "O, he is so surprised over the failure of his medicine that he has gone off into a trance."

A Visit to a Monastery

The Buddhist priest is easily recognized wherever one meets him, in India, Burma or Ceylon. His head is always closely shaven and his robes are generally of a dark and dingy yellow or orange color. As soon as a priest gives himself to this work he ceases then and there to handle money, and begins to beg his food and clothing from philanthropic laymen. The rules in this regard are very strict and are apparently obeyed to the letter. One day we saw four Buddhist priests board a street car and watched rather curiously to see how they would manage the matter of car-fare. They were prepared for the occasion, however, for accompanying them was a little boy who handled the "filthy lucre" for the whole crowd. In Malaysia and China priests fully ordained are



THE "HEARSE" AT A PRIEST'S FUNERAL

A BUDDHIST SHRINE IN PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION

marked with six or eight little white scars arranged like domino spots on the tops of their heads. In the ordination ceremony while the priest is kneeling, pieces of incense are placed on his head and ignited. If he moves a muscle or cries with pain as they burn their way through the hair and flesh to the bone of the skull, he is judged unfit for the office. If, on the other hand, he faces the ordeal bravely, the scars on his head ever afterward constitute his ordination credentials. In Burma we had the privilege of visiting a monastery, and found the priests, some twenty-five in number, very polite and cordial. The building was situated some miles from the town in a grove of trees, and on this particular day the place was crowded with people who had come for miles to attend the funeral of one of the priests. Inside the monastery we found one large room in which evidently the priests ate, slept, and studied. There was an entire absence of furniture, and everything seemed to be bare and uninviting.

Near the entrance to the monastery stood the huge figure of an elephant made of cloth and bamboo and mounted on a wagon. On his back was a box containing the body of the dead priest, which had been embalmed in honey for a month. The funeral, which lasted three days, had been made a gay occasion, and out in the open spaces before the monastery numerous booths had been erected in which informal re-

ceptions were in progress. We were invited by the head man of the village to make ourselves at home in his booth, where he presented us with some huge Burmese cigars and treated us to music on a Victrola. Offerings of rice pots, and various elaborate conveyances, on which by turns the body was to be drawn around the funeral pyre, had been presented by different villages, each endeavoring to outdo the other in its gift. On the third day of the funeral exercises the body was placed on the top of a high tower constructed of bamboo and gaily decorated with colored tissue paper, which, after some ceremony, was ignited, and the body thus cremated.

On the Roof of the World

One of the most fascinating developments of Buddhism is the Tibetan form, for beyond the Himalayas we find the country completely in the power of this religion, while curious rites and ceremonies sharply distinguish Lamaism from the faith as it is found in Ceylon, Burma, Japan, and elsewhere. Most of these peculiar characteristics are, of course, animistic in their nature and not an outgrowth of the fundamental teachings of Buddha, but they are, nevertheless, intensely interesting. The very mystery of Tibet, for so long a closed country, and of Lhasa, its capital, the "Forbidden City," adds still greater zest to our study of Buddhism on "the roof of the world." Probably no country is so unanimous

in its faith as is Tibet. Mr. John Claude White says, "The number of monks in Tibet is said to be very large, nearly five hundred thousand housed in ten hundred and twenty-six monasteries, and this out of a population of about three and one half millions is a very large proportion."[6] Strange Lhasa is preeminently a Buddhist city, or, rather, a double city, situated in a valley lying twelve thousand feet above sea level with a majestic background of picturesque mountains. Here on Potala Hill lives the great Dalai Lama, in a palace of nearly five hundred rooms, that looks, on account of its unique architecture, like a gigantic mansion dropped down from the skies. Just at the foot of the Hill is a great settlement of one hundred and fifty thousand priests. At the other end of the valley is the other division of the city reserved for the laity, in the midst of which is located the Great Temple where annually eighty thousand priests meet for a three weeks' conference.

The services conducted from time to time in this temple are of unique interest because of their striking similarity to those of the Roman Catholic Church. "At the sound of a horn or trumpet the clergy assemble in the entrance hall, wearing the cloak and cap; and at its third blast the procession, with the living Buddha at its head, marches down the aisle. When he is

[6] The National Geographic Magazine, March, 1916. Article, "The World's Strangest Capital." Page 288.

seated on his throne each lama bows three times before him and then seats himself cross-legged on the divan according to his rank. A bell is then rung and all murmur the Three Refuges, the Ten Precepts, and other formulas. After silence is restored the bell sounds again, and the priests now sing in the choir longer pieces from the sacred books. If it be a feast day, the highest point of the service is reached in the Tuisol, or prayer for sanctification, when the offerings are blest. A bell is rung and all the monks burst out into a hymn of prayer for the presence of the spirit of all the Buddhas. One of them raises aloft over his head a looking-glass, the idea of which seems to be to catch the image of the spirit as it comes; a second raises aloft a jug; a third, the mystic symbol of the world; a fourth a cup; and others, other sacred vessels or mystic symbols. Meanwhile the voices of the singers and the sound of the bells and drums and trumpets grow louder and louder, and the church is filled with incense from the sacred censers. The monk with the jug pours several times water mixed with sugar and saffron over the mirror, which another wipes each time with a napkin of silk. The water flows over the mirror on to the symbol of the world and is caught in the cup beneath. Then the holy mixture is poured on to another jug and a drop or two is allowed to trickle on to the hands of each of the worshiping monks, who marks the crown of

his shaven head, his forehead and his breast with the sacred liquid. He then reverently swallows the remaining drops; and, in so doing, believes himself to be mystically swallowing a part of the Divine Being whose image has been caught in the mirror over which the water has past."[7]

It was not our privilege, of course, to pass over the border into this mysterious country, but in Darjeeling, nestled under the giant Himalayas on the Indian side, one also finds Lamaism in its native form, for many Tibetans have made the perilous journey through the dangerous passes of these mountain barriers and have taken up their abode in that city. These people are very religious, at least in a formal sense, as is attested by the thousands of long banners set up in vertical position on poles, trees, fences, and even on the bushes by the roadside. As one makes his way on the miniature mountain railway toward the city of Darjeeling he wonders whether some great event is not being celebrated, for everywhere these banners flutter in the wind. It is no ephemeral celebration, however, for thousands of prayers are being silently spoken as these strips of cloth wave back and forth in the breezes. Then there are the prayer-wheels. The merchant sits before his shop whirling his wheel, inside of which is a long strip of paper with numerous prayers recorded thereon. The housewife whirls her prayer-wheel. Round and round in endless

[7] Buddhism, by T. W. Rhys Davids, pp. 249, 250.

monotony these wheels are turned, every revolution representing a petition. One morning we made our way down the steep hillside to see a Buddhist temple. Here were more banners, a great forest of them, at the entrance to the temple grounds. And there were more prayer-wheels too. Just outside the temple was an enormous one run by water. In the case of some others the motive power was the wind. Some day doubtless we shall find the priests taking advantage of the new scientific discoveries of the age in the application of electricity to their worship. Then the traveler may run across prayer-wheels whose power is furnished by electric motors, thus typifying the complete dominance of the realm of the mechanical over that of the spiritual. Nor would this be an illogical outcome of Buddhist teachings. Inside the temple we found a strange jumble of images of Buddha, paintings, various trinkets, and little shrines. As we were leaving, the priest in charge hinted strongly for a fee, which he finally received.

So everywhere in Darjeeling there are evidences of prayer, but it should be understood that prayer in the Tibetan sense is a very mechanical sort of exercise, and also that it is looked upon as a kind of magic, by means of which the evils of life somehow can be prevented from falling upon the worshiper. One day we were making a purchase in one of the shops on the main street of this city when a woman with her little child

came in and at once manifested considerable interest in the transaction. Noticing a peculiar cloth-covered charm about the child's neck, we offered to buy it. At once the mother became highly indignant, and even frightened, lest the child should lose this magic symbol and thus invite some terrible disaster. While the conversation was going on, however, we slyly pulled open a loose end of the cloth covering the charm and disclosed a photographic film can, upon which was the name of a famous Rochester, New York, firm. Thus was the commonplace blessed into sacredness by this Buddhist mother.

At three o'clock one winter morning we started up Tiger Hill with a jolly group of these Tibetans to see Mount Everest. The "Hill" is more than five thousand feet above sea level and affords a splendid view of the majestic Himalayas, provided the weather is clear, which is the case this time of year only about one day in ten. However, this particular day was an auspicious one, for the stars were shining brightly, and in spite of the early hour and the cold these chair-bearers were in the happiest of moods, cracking jokes and singing in their strange native tongue almost every step of the weary climb. At last we arrived on the summit of the Hill and found there hundreds of "prayers" fluttering in the breeze. It was almost six o'clock. Slowly the east began to grow a pale pink. The pink merged gradually into a red, and off to the west the dim

outlines of snow began to appear like ridges of clouds without visible earthly attachment. Presently the sky became lighter and the mountains still more distinct to the view. Then the sun, like a great glowing ball of fire, moved slowly upward on the distant horizon, and there across the vast abyss we saw the roof of the world! Away to the left was Mount Everest with its snow-crowned peak lifted more than twenty-nine thousand feet into space. Just opposite stood majestic Kinchinjanga, nearly as high, with a great rent of bare rock cleaving its white summit in twain. The vastness and splendor of the scene created a fresh and vivid sense of the infinite. The indescribable beauty of the shifting colors on the dazzling snow, the awful immensity, the silent grandeur stirred the emotions to their very depths and inspired spontaneous praise to the Creator of all the earth. In the midst of this mood of worship we heard the weird strains of a wild Tibetan chant and, turning, saw one of the bearers standing alone on a slight elevation facing the wonderful scene and singing a Buddhist temple hymn. For the moment both Christian and Buddhist were lifted above the limitations of creed in a common vision of the power and majesty of the Eternal God and Father of us all, and once more the conviction that the Infinite has "left not himself without witness" anywhere in this vast world was freshly reenforced.

A GROUP OF TIBETANS ON TIGER HILL

A BUDDHIST PRAYER WHEEL

Buddhism in China and Japan

As we have already seen, the Buddhist missionary propaganda reached China during the second century before Christ, subsequently was carried to Korea, and finally to Japan. In these countries, especially in China, with the passing years the faith became so changed by the influence of animistic elements that to-day it is scarcely recognizable as the original Buddhism of India. Moreover, although nominally about two thirds of the Chinese are followers of Gotama, the densest ignorance as to his teachings prevails not only among the laity but even among the priestly leaders themselves. Added to this fact we also must remember that in China a man may with perfect consistency profess two or three religions at the same time. Therefore the Buddhism of China is scarcely true enough even to the bare essentials of the faith to deserve the name. Here opposition to superstitious rites and materialistic tendencies, as well as the strong ethical emphasis of the Master, is quite generally wanting and Buddhism has become spectacular and formal. Contrary to the teachings of Gotama, a well-defined belief in the existence of the soul has developed among the Chinese and the Buddhas have gradually taken on the character of gods, while for the doctrine of Nirvana has been substituted a belief in the materialistic "Paradise of the West." In keeping with this tendency also, we find the Chinese priests shifting responsibility

in the matter of salvation from complete reliance upon one's own efforts to a lazy dependence upon the celestial Buddhas or gods. Thus in place of the stern duty ethics of the Master we find a program of ritualistic observances and debasing superstitions. It is very doubtful whether more than a small minority of the Buddhist priests of China have any clear understanding of the problem that the Great Teacher faced or of his proposed solution.

In Canton one day we visited the great Temple of Five Hundred Ahrants. Here are represented in life-size form five hundred worthies who have won mental illumination. Before each is a pot in which incense sticks are kept burning as a form of continuous worship. Among these Ahrants is one lone European, Marco Polo, the great pioneer traveler in the Far East. We had the privilege of meeting the priest in charge of this temple that day and proposed to take his photograph. He was very polite but thoroughly frightened, for he explained that if his picture were taken, the experience might mean his death, and afterward punishment in hell. After some discussion, however, we offered him a dime provided he would pose for the photograph. At this his face became a study, for he was evidently torn between greed for gain and a desire "to flee from the wrath to come." In the end, however, with much fear and trembling, like thousands of ordinary sinners, he chose the way of pres-

ent materialistic gain and risked his future welfare.

In the great Lama Temple in the capital city of Peking the extent of this deterioration of Buddhism is even more manifest. In one of the great, dark temple halls they showed us the trinity of Buddhas, before each of which was a table with vessels of the most beautiful cloisonne ware. The attendant also brought out numerous small Buddhas of rare workmanship and material from their little shrines and in whispers began to bargain and explain that he might steal one of them from the temple if we desired to buy. Everywhere there were begging priests, but one look into their shrewd, degenerate faces was enough to convince the traveler that they had no convictions, but were in the profession simply for a livelihood. In another hall in these same grounds is a gigantic image of Buddha entirely different from any other in the world. It represents him as cruel and threatening, with none of the calm and benevolence of the meditating figures. This image, which is about sixty feet high, is said to have been carved out of a single piece of sandal wood and is a real marvel of its kind, but it does not in the least degree represent true Buddhism.

In still another hall in connection with the Lama Temple one can see for a consideration the seamy side of this religion. Here in images and pictures are representations of the vilest sort

which the priests connect with the history and teachings of the faith. In justice to Buddhism, however, it should be said that in this instance only did we see any evidence of sensuality in relation to the faith in all the countries where it is represented.

In the great assembly hall of the Lama Temple the day of our visit they were holding a great convention of lama priests, many representatives having come from far away Tibet to take part in the meeting. We were allowed to enter the building and to walk about the aisles and open spaces during the exercises. There were numerous very old men there, but also some mere boys of thirteen or fourteen years. The head lama stood in a conspicuous place and kept endlessly intoning the ritual, with now and then a response from the crowd of priests. Occasionally also the leader sounded a gong, which seemed to indicate an especially sacred period in the service. The sum total of the proceedings during our rather long stay in the Lama Temple seemed to be just this monotonous recitation of ritual. Some of the younger priests themselves even appeared to be weary of it all, and were lolling over their hard benches or whispering to each other, while many of the older ones simply sat in a dull, dazed fashion, as if enduring some incomprehensible jumble of mere words.

In Japan also Buddhism has undergone many modifications, though not to the extent or along

the same lines as in China, for in the Island Empire it appears "handsome and out of the wet" compared with the cruder expressions characterizing the faith in the great Republic. Japanese Buddhism early met and partly merged with other faiths and teachings, and in modern times has been subjected to a new influence in its contact with Christianity and Western civilization. How its essential doctrines will survive under these circumstances remains still to be seen. The outstanding emphasis of Buddhism in its pure form is upon the passive attitude toward life and its multitudinous activities, and in this the faith is typically Oriental. But the Japan of to-day rapidly is being Westernized, and the people are taking on the energetic habits of Occidentals in almost every department of their complex life. In business, in education, in government, and even in religion, more and more these people are forsaking Eastern ideals for those of the West. The whole movement thus is affecting the influence of Gotama's teachings, and must continue increasingly to do so in view of the new spirit of progressiveness that characterizes the coming generation in that land. This Japanese awakening to the value of an active attitude toward life, especially in its bearing on religion, is well revealed in the words of Dr. Tasuku Harada, president of Doshisha Univerity in Kyoto, in a comparison of the Eastern and Western views of life. He says: "Christianity

offers a positive view of life. Oriental religion is on the whole passive, or even pessimistic. Contrasted with it, Christianity gives us a positive, optimistic conception. It is Christianity that has abolished the conception of religion as a dull, unprogressive, and sorrowful affair. Through the character of the missionaries and the methods of their activity religion has come to be looked upon as a matter of active life. Thus the whole idea of religion has been changed in the minds of the Japanese; especially have young men been impressed by this aspect of Christianity and have been drawn towards it."[8]

The indigenous religion of Japan is Shinto, "the way of the gods," a faith very loosely conceived and practiced. It has no body of very definite teachings and is even less exacting as to practice. Perhaps it can best be defined on the side of theory as a mixture of animism, ancestor worship, and patriotism. The most important deity of the faith is the Sun Goddess, from whom have descended in unbroken line the Mikados of Japan. Its moral teachings are likewise few. One is exhorted to follow his own natural impulses and to be obedient to the state authorities, especially to the Mikado himself. There are scarcely any services held in connection with the practice of the cult, and such as do take place consist largely in the presentation in

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[8] The Faith of Japan, by Tasuku Harada, LL.D., pp. 176, 177.

the temples of offerings of food by priests, or even young girl priestesses, and the recitation of addresses. There are really two types of Shinto—one, the official or state religion that emphasizes the veneration of Imperial ancestors and expresses itself on important patriotic occasions, and the popular faith with which is mingled considerable superstition. The followers of this everyday religion are divided into more than fifty sects and subsects. The teachings of Confucius in addition to Shinto, and scarcely competing with it in any sense, have profoundly influenced the Japanese, for from him they have drawn practically all of their ethical principles, and in addition have reenforced their original Shinto by embodying therein his exhortations on the veneration of ancestors.

Buddhism came indirectly to Japan by way of Korea when one of the kings of that country sent a present in the form of an image of Buddha and some of the sacred literature of the sect to the emperor of Japan. This was about A. D. 552. The two leading parties of the government at once divided on the question of receiving the new faith, with the final result that the Soga family, who had espoused the cause of Buddhism, triumphed. Later in Shotoku-Taishi the new faith found a most zealous advocate. This prince wrote and spoke most earnestly in favor of Buddhism, and to him much of the credit belongs for the firm establishment of the faith. In the

ninth century a shrewd Buddhist priest declared that all the great gods and heroes of Shintoism were really Buddhas, and by this compromise completed the practical merging of the two religions. As has already been hinted, and in view of this absorption of the deities of Shintoism, Buddhism went far astray in Japan from the pure teachings of its founder. Animistic superstitions, idolatry, and a pantheon of numerous gods and goddesses, besides elaborate ceremonies and complex rituals, were some of the excrescences that developed rapidly and helped to popularize the imported faith. As one might infer from this fact, there are no distinct lines of demarkation separating Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan. The fact is that the three have been quite welded together and their essential differences are looked upon simply as of a supplementary character. Therefore, multitudes of the people are found professing, not one faith only, but two, and even all three at the same time. Such an attitude, however, is in perfect keeping with the nature of the Oriental mind.

But, after all, Buddhism has had a very vigorous development and has been a most important factor in molding the distinctive spirit of Japan. Images of Buddha in meditation are to be found everywhere and splendid temples abound throughout the land. In the beautiful city of Nara, the ancient capital of the country, we saw the famous Daibutsu in the temple grounds of Todaiji. In

A BUDDHIST MONASTERY IN BURMA

BUDDHIST SCHOOL BOYS IN JAPAN

spite of the cold rain a large number of pilgrims had come that June day to visit the shrine and to pay their respects to the memory of the Great Teacher. The Daibutsu at Nara is the largest sitting image of the Master in the world, with the possible exception of the one in Peking which, however, is scarcely a typical Buddha. It is more than fifty feet high, the face alone being sixteen feet long and nine feet broad. The original figure was erected in A. D. 749, but many repairs and changes have been made from time to time since that date. Just recently the temple and image have been rebeautified at a tremendous cost. The casting of the Daibutsu must have taken much time and patience, as well as exceptional skill, for it is constructed entirely of bronze. Buddha sits there on a great lotus blossom with one hand uplifted, the palm toward the worshipers, while on the face there is the usual expressionless calm. Just in front of the gigantic figure that day stood a Japanese father with his little son. The two conversed in reverent tones and in the spirit of hearty comradeship. By the gestures of the father it was evident that he was explaining in simple fashion the life and teachings of the Great Teacher to the boy by his side. As we were about to leave the place an attendant induced us to purchase some wooden slabs on which were written in Japanese our names and forecasts of our lives. Thus fortune-telling and other popular superstitions flourish under the very

shadow of the image of one who devoted his life to combating ignorance and fear.

There is another Daibutsu, not quite so large as the one at Nara, at Kamakura. However, it is a much finer one, and is said to symbolize most perfectly the teachings of Buddhism in the expression of perfect peace that characterizes the face. The eyes are of pure gold, and infinite pains were taken in the construction of the whole figure, that it might be as artistically perfect as possible. The beauty and meaning of this Daibutsu grows upon one as he visits the spot for the second or third time.

But the Buddhism of Japan is reflected in a far more important way than in these colossal images and the truly splendid temples of the land. Even the casual traveler must sense an underlying philosophy in the spirit of the people as it is manifested in their everyday business dealings, their social intercourse, their education, their patriotism, and their æsthetic instincts. Japan is truly a land of beauty. Here art permeates everything. During our entire stay in the country it was difficult even for a moment to shake off the feeling that we were in the midst of a dream, or in some far-off fairyland. In the beautiful temple grounds at Nara, in the ancient groves of Nikko, under the cherry blossoms in Yokohama, even in the little village of Fukuoka, as a guest in the quaint native houses, or on the street passing the smiling men and women and

the wonderful children, always it was the same—a glimpse, a hint, a short experience of something intangible but eternally beautiful. And what is the interpretation of this spirit? Is it not to be found in the maxim "Seize the day"? Buddhism offers nothing in explanation of life except that which can be understood through the senses. It holds no hope of existence beyond the grave. It knows no god. Even the soul is only a series of passing states. Thus it fixes the attention of its followers on the evanescent joy or beauty of the moment, but still not in any Epicurean sense, for the aim of existence is not to find life in the fulfillment of any earthly desire. Thus there is developed a love of the æsthetic that is in a sense unselfish, which creates and enjoys the evanescent beauty of the now in companionship with others who likewise are on their long journey into the Mystery.

In old Puritan New England we find Japan's opposite. Here, life was cold and barren, and instead of the enjoyment of the beautiful there flourished only a rugged zeal for righteousness and a hope of heavenly reward. Moreover, if we look for the explanation of the spirit of those days, we find it largely in a theology diametrically opposed to the teachings of Buddha. These Puritan fathers stressed the great doctrine of the future world and found here only a "vale of tears," through which the soul must pass to reach the heavenly city. Hence there was nothing worth

while in itself so far as this world was concerned, and existence became a drab monotony. In these two instances, then, the importance of the underlying philosophy of a people is strikingly illustrated, for the fundamental theoretical view of life and its meaning is sure to work out sooner or later in most concrete form. It may produce a sad, superficial reliance on the fleeting present or the hard suppression of legitimate instincts. Hence the greatest and most fundamental of all problems always has been and always must be a theological one.

An Estimate of Buddhism

Gotama Buddha ranks as one of the world's greatest men, for not only did he squarely face the problem of existence, and apply the logic of his conclusions rigorously to his own life and conduct, but with unquestionable sincerity he loved his fellow men and sought to release them from the common woes of humanity. For these reasons Buddhism deserves our careful consideration. Moreover, although truth is not established by mere numbers, the fact that to-day there are nearly one hundred and forty million followers of this Teacher is of some significance, and worthy of our attention. So we turn in conclusion to a brief analysis of the points of strength and weakness that characterize this great world-religion.

In seeking to judge the worth of Buddhism both

from the standpoint of theory and practice, it is exceedingly refreshing to have to deal with a system that is clear-cut and definite, rather than with the hazy and often contradictory teachings of Hinduism, for example. Buddhism is the most intellectually respectable of all the indigenous religions of the Far East and has many points of real strength. To begin with, it possesses the scientific spirit. Gotama was resolved to deal only with facts as he understood facts. Therefore, he would have nothing to do with metaphysics or speculative theories. The "modern scientific attitude," then, is not modern at all, for no scientist of to-day has ever held himself more closely to his data than did Gotama Buddha over five hundred years before Christ was born.

In keeping with this spirit, we find him emphasizing the truth that this world is one of strict law and order, not only in the material world but in the realm of mind as well. Consequently, he eliminated almost entirely the mystical element from his teachings, and thus cleared the system at the start of Hindu fanaticism. His path of faith became the way of the golden mean, for, on the one hand, he denounced with vigor the fallacy that life is to be found in the satisfaction of the senses, and on the other, with equal vigor, that it was to be found in the practice of asceticism.

Salvation, he said, lay not in externals, but in a state of mind, and therefore rituals, spectacular

services, and other outside aids were worthless so far as permanent deliverance was concerned. Out of all this grew a splendid system of ethics. Benevolence, patience, humility, purity, and contemplation are urged upon those who would follow the Eightfold Path to Nirvana; and, whatever may be said as to the failure on the side of the practical realization of these virtues, no critic can find fault with such moral ideals.

Still another very important element of strength lay in Buddha's proclamation of a new democracy. He struck without compromise at the elements that hardened later on into the Indian caste system, and proclaimed equality for all. Here in Buddhism, then, was found a common brotherhood without any distinctions. We can scarcely imagine what such a teaching meant to the oppressed of those days. It is no wonder that the ignorant, the poor, the persecuted, flocked to this new Teacher. And yet, strange to say, the system appealed even more strongly to the aristocracy, so that nearly all of the early leaders were drawn from the ranks of wealth, and even of royalty.

Such are some of the elements of strength characterizing the faith, but there are also certain fundamental weaknesses that must not be overlooked. Buddhism is in theory agnostic, but its logic leads straight to the atheistic plane, and there it must, of course, be judged. While Gotama professed to deal only with facts and to be free

in his thinking from the dreadful disease of "opinion," yet, as a matter of fact, with naïve deliberation he drags into his discussions considerable *a priori* philosophy. It is, to be sure, the negative attitude of atheism, but it is nevertheless as much a philosophy as the most highly developed theism. So he, himself, was not quite free from speculation, and, therefore, is obliged to submit to a discussion that leads into the realm of metaphysics and epistemology, and in these spheres the true worth of his theory as a system of truth must be ascertained. Here the best scholarship has shown conclusively that atheism in its very nature is suicidal in the realm of human knowledge, and impossible as a world solution.

Again, as in the case of some modern scientists, Buddha's zeal for facts needs some close analyzing, for he interprets facts in a materialistic fashion, assuming that only those things or occurrences that are perceptible to the senses can be called facts. He omitted, therefore, in his classification a whole range of the less tangible realities of life, such as the categories of the mind, the spontaneous aspirations of the soul, and other important spiritual elements. Recently Sir Oliver Lodge has called attention to this prevalent error among modern scientists, and insists that there are vast stores of facts in the unseen world with which we must reckon. So while Gotama Buddha was scientific, he was not scientific

enough in the formulation of his teachings. In view of this limitation, it is no surprise to find that he was really the great pioneer in the realm of physiological psychology. Indeed, one of the three Pitakas is devoted wholly to the larger development of Buddha's original teachings in the discussion of mental phenomena from the materialistic viewpoint. The modern followers of Buddha in this respect are legion, for it has become the fashion in recent years to find in this realm of materialistic psychology the final and sufficient solution for nearly all the problems of human life. Now, no one, of course, would dispute the assertion that the mind and, indeed, our whole life is materialistically conditioned, but this does not mean that life and mind are to be defined solely in terms of matter, motion and force, bone, flesh and blood, or even ganglia, nerve centers, and sensations. Other elements than these enter into the processes of our thoughts, our wills, and our emotions. There is still the unseen mystery of the free soul to be considered, and the fact is that this is just the element that so frequently upsets all the nice findings of the psychological laboratory, the elaborate curves and diagrams and the abstract classifications so familiar to the modern student. Psychology is of great value as a description of mental phenomena and processes, but when it enters the realm of final explanation it has invaded a field quite foreign to its genius and therefore must fail to

produce worthy results. There is a place for science and there is a place for philosophy in the world of human research, and so long as students in these realms confine themselves each to his own particular task there will be no confusion. Difficulty is sure to arise, however, when the scientist begins to dogmatize about philosophy, and likewise when the philosopher begins to dogmatize about scientific matters, for the two sets of facts are of a different order and require, therefore, a different type of treatment. Buddha entirely overlooked many real, though unseen, facts, and also treated those with which he did deal in a limited and materialistic way.

From the practical standpoint also, upon the whole, the influence of Buddhism has not been on the side of culture, education, and the progress of civilization as we conceive these matters, for the very logic of the faith makes for passivity. In Tibet, where it has had an unrestricted opportunity, we see its typical fruits in the ignorance, superstition, and laziness that everywhere abound, for here there is no such thing as growth and progress in individual, social, or national life. Buddhistic China is another illustration pointing the same way. In Japan we have a different situation, but in this case there are some important outside elements at work and a strongly developed national spirit fostered by the earlier Shinto faith.

Ethically likewise this great religion disappoints

us, for, as has already been suggested, Gotama taught some very worthy moral precepts. In life, however, apparently the passive virtues are the ones most emphasized and practiced, while those of an aggressive and altruistic character seem to receive only scant consideration. One day on a train in Ceylon we inquired of a prominent business man who had lived among the Buddhists in the center of the island for many years, regarding their morals, and he replied that, so far as his observation went, they were neither better nor worse than those of the other natives of the Far East. Inasmuch as one of the very strongest boasts of the faith is its ethical emphasis, one naturally would be led to expect exceptional fruit in life as the result of its teachings, but such a condition, unfortunately, we do not find.

The chief difficulty, however, witn Buddhism lies not so much in the weakness of its ideals as in its lack of power. It is a religion of denial, a negative faith. Practically speaking, it denies the existence of God and of the soul, it condemns the world and human existence as an empty show and offers as its final reward a state that means at least the extinction of individuality. Such a faith when thoroughly understood means a hopelessness of outlook and a paralysis of initiative that cannot but deaden life in all its various aspects. Buddhism stripped of nonessentials is just plain atheism, and, in spite of the noble

character of its founder and his love for humanity, the well-developed system of teaching, the moral values upheld, and sometimes worthily expressed, and the missionary success of the faith, it can offer us in the final analysis only mental and spiritual darkness. In no sense can it redeem the world.

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CHAPTER V

THE MOSLEM MILLIONS

Your God is one God, there is no God but he, the most merciful.—*Mohammed.*

CHAPTER V

THE MOSLEM MILLIONS

MOHAMMEDANISM is distinctively a masculine religion. It represents the greatest layman's missionary movement ever projected in the history of the world. There are to-day approximately 225,000,000 followers of the Prophet, representing an almost incredible growth during the relatively short period since his death. There are Moslems in every land, even in England and America. In fact, there are more Mohammedans in the British empire by 5,000,000 than there are Christians. In Europe there are 3,500,000; in Africa about 60,000,000; in Asia, nearly 160,000,000, besides those in Australia and America. And not only do the rapid growth and these striking statistics challenge our attention, but we must also recognize that Moslem converts become remarkably zealous and loyal to their faith. The hardest problem, therefore, of Christian missions to-day is the evangelization of the Mohammedan world. Islam, moreover, is Christianity's greatest rival in the missionary enterprise. In Arabia, Syria, Persia, Turkey, Europe, Afghanistan, India, Burma, Malaysia, China, and the Philippine Islands the propaganda has been carried forward with amazing results, while in

Africa, especially of late years, the success of the Moslems has been so marked that they have all but captured the continent and to-day are evangelizing its people more rapidly even than are the Christian missionaries.

Mohammed, a Dominating Personality

What is the secret of the spread of Islam? A number of causes might be cited for the success of the movement. Carlyle has given us one in his study of Mohammed, "The Hero as a Prophet," in a captivating analysis of this great personality, whose outstanding characteristic was his indomitable will. Surely, Mohammedanism is a unique illustration of the fact that an institution always takes on the character of its founder. The man was born about A. D. 570 in Mecca, after the death of his father Abdallah, but up to his twenty-fifth year nothing remarkable in his life is recorded. About this time, however, he undertook to manage a caravan which Khadija, a wealthy widow, was sending to Syria, and as a result of this venture a friendship was formed with her that later developed into love and marriage. It is said that the marriage was a happy one, and six children were born of this union. During the next period of his life Mohammed spent much time in wandering among the mountains in the neighborhood of Mecca and in meditating on the great problems of human life and destiny. Doubtless also he came into contact with the

Jews who had settled in Arabia and with some Christians. Out of these experiences and reflections there gradually arose in his mind a strong faith in the unity of God and a firm conviction that he was called to be the chosen prophet of the Most High. These revelations he communicated to his wife and relatives, and succeeded in making a few converts within the circle of his own family. His preaching, however, was not well received by the general public, though he gained a few more followers. He was persecuted and his life threatened until he finally took flight to Medina, where, assuming the role of dictator, he built a mosque and started his war upon the Koreish of Mecca, meanwhile marrying his sixth wife. The Medina period of the Prophet's career was marked by numerous expeditions against neighboring Jewish tribes and a successful assault on his native city of Mecca. It was also during these years that he sent messages to foreign rulers inviting them to embrace the faith. The capture of Mecca and the destruction of every evidence of the old idolatrous worship settled once for all his place of leadership, and the Mohammedan movement to evangelize the world began in earnest. His life closed at the age of sixty-three with a characteristic incident, for even from his sick bed he sent forth an expedition into Syria, and with his dying breath affirmed his belief in God and his craving for the companionship of the Most High.

Such are the bare facts of Mohammed's life. They represent the realistic side of it. But back of these relatively commonplace events there were other facts that account not only for the trend of his own life but also in some measure for the remarkable progress of Islam since his death. These are the intangible and mysterious facts of his character. Some have attempted to explain Mohammed by simply asserting that he was subject to fits and hallucinations. Others have attacked the sincerity of the man and pictured him as an unscrupulous tyrant. It is probable that neither of these explanations is wholly adequate. It is certain that here we have a man of unusual will power and courage, and it is also certain that he projected his dominating personality with a contagious enthusiasm into the whole movement. Likewise the Koran bears witness to his mental acumen, though his intellectual powers were rather practical than reflective. Mohammed was a patient, generous man, as well, and, therefore, made friends, whom he held through the exercise of these qualities mingled with considerable tact and diplomacy. That he thoroughly believed at the start in his revelations and in his mission and message is scarcely debatable. If, however, one studies his career closely as it unfolds, it is equally clear that, under the stress of his unbridled ambition, he began later on to compromise and to exchange the power of sincerity for that of shrewd manipu-

lation. Toward the end of his life he even did not hesitate to proclaim a special revelation whenever he desired to do an act that involved a clear violation of the laws of Islam. Mohammedanism, then, first of all, must be studied in the light of the Prophet's own personality.

A Simple Creed

Islam's one tremendous truth, the unity of God, proclaimed with fanatical zeal, gripped and still grips the minds of men everywhere. It was a fresh message in the midst of the babel of degrading idolatry and superstitious polytheism, and it found an answer in the intuitions of men's own souls. Mohammedanism is a remarkable illustration of the power of one truth thoroughly believed to grip and transform the lives of men. Incidentally, geography was on the side of the Prophet in the proclamation of the great truth, for a better place than Arabia could scarcely have been chosen for the birth of Islam. From this center the mighty influence went forth, east and west, north and south, to Asia, Europe, Africa, and the islands of the sea. Still another inestimable advantage possessed by this missionary religion was the simplicity of its doctrinal statement and of the requirements exacted from its converts. "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Prophet of God"—this is the doctrine, so clear and simple that no man, however ignorant, need to miss its meaning. To believe

this one sentence makes a man a Mohammedan. The requirements likewise are simple and easily met. Let us consider the five items:

(1) The recitation of the creed.

(2) A short prayer five times a day directed toward Mecca.

(3) Systematic almsgiving.

(4) Fasting in the daytime during the month of Ramadan.

(5) A pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime.

Such a simple program even a half-civilized Moro can adopt and follow. This is the essence of the faith on the practical side, though, of course, there is a Moslem theology wrought out in the sacred book, the Koran, which was directly revealed to the Prophet himself and is considered absolutely infallible, even to the very wording of its passages. The canon of this sacred book was fixed within thirty years after Mohammed's death, and practically no changes have been made since that time. The Koran in style is of a narrative and hortatory character, embodying the elements of history, law, theology, and ritual, the whole divided into *surahs*, or chapters. As to the sources of material, much of the Koran came from the Hebrews, for Mohammed drew liberally from the Old and even from the New Testament, though his record is not always accurate either as to facts or names. Jesus Christ is recognized as one of the prophets, but his deity is denied. The Koran account of his life abounds in mistakes, and

INTERIOR PEARL MOSQUE AT AGRA

MOHAMMEDANS AT WORSHIP

even furnishes contradictory passages as to his death. Other material in the Koran is taken from the life of Mohammed himself, and includes special revelations, moral precepts, and doctrines.

Every Moslem an Evangelist

The power of a simple message also is reenforced by the power of a simple method of propagation. At the beginning Moslem missionary work was carried on literally by the sword. With a terrible courage these early followers of the Prophet pushed their holy war not only in Arabia but also in Syria, Persia, Egypt, Africa, Turkey, India, the Malay Archipelago, and elsewhere. The bloody work was, of course, furthered by the inherent fanaticism of the faith, also by the shrewd doctrine of the Prophet, "To the believer belong the idolater's goods." Even death itself met while killing a heathen greatly increased the believer's heavenly reward. Is it any wonder with such a play on motives that Mohammedanism began to sweep the world? In modern times the literal sword is not so much in evidence, but the same spirit of fanatical zeal for the faith still prevails. It was asserted above that the missionary effort of the Moslems was a layman's movement. So it is, for they have neither an organized missionary society nor paid agents, though in recent years a kind of priesthood is beginning to develop. The work is carried on by merchants and traders in the regular course of their business. These travelers,

for example, visit the tribes of Africa for the purpose of money-making, and in the course of the bargaining also tell the story of their faith. There is nothing professional about these lay missionaries, nothing to arouse suspicion. Friendships are cultivated, the simple doctrine is outlined, and Moslem converts are made by the thousands. With such a method of evangelization it is not strange that more than half of the continent of Africa is to-day dominated by Islam.

Some months ago with an American friend we were making the trip by rail from Madras to Bombay. The porter for our compartment was a fine, stalwart Mohammedan, whose great Indian turban of green and white added dignity to his already commanding appearance. As we sped along across the hot roadbed he began to talk in broken English. After some comments on points of interest along the way, he presently turned the conversation to the subject of religion. "Master," said he, "you know Adam?" Realizing that he was about to explain something of his faith, we assumed the attitude of inquiry and replied with another question, "Who was Adam?" This started the porter on a long explanation of Old Testament history and teaching. He took up the story of Cain and Abel and afterward the lives of the prophets. Then step by step he outlined the Mohammedan doctrine, and finally began to talk of prayer. In reply to a question as to his habits of prayer he said: "I pray five

times every day. O, one must pray. Prayer is very important, and God wants us to pray." When the objection was urged that his work might interfere with these fixed times of prayer, and as an illustration it was pointed out that he might some day be in the midst of this exercise when the guard gave the signal to start the train, this earnest Moslem drew himself up to his full height, his black eyes flashing as did the Prophet's when he ordered the assault on Mecca, and made this answer: "What difference would *that* make? What is job? What is business? What is money? What is reputation? What is wife and home? There is God!" Faith like that and zeal like that is the outstanding secret of Islam's progress. But the porter-evangelist was not yet through. In spite of the interruptions due to station stops, when duty required him to stand at the steps of the car, he invariably returned to continue the conversation. Finally he began a personal appeal that would have done credit to the most zealous Christian worker. When at last we left this Moslem evangelist we wondered what would happen if every follower of Christ were to develop such practical earnestness for the kingdom of God.

Let us now turn our attention specifically to Mohammedanism in India and study the faith with this country as the background, for here we have fully sixty-five million of the faithful. India represents the best Moslem missionary endeavor,

for here, in spite of the strength of Hinduism and other religions, and in recent years under a Christian government, Mohammed has captured nearly a fourth of the people. The story of the conquest of India by Islam, and the reign for more than six hundred and fifty years of Mohammedan sovereigns and Moguls in the ancient city of Delhi, is full of strange romance. The first Moslem contact with India came during the seventh and eighth centuries, but it was not until about 1200 that the famous "Slave" dynasty began with the reign of Kutb-un-din. Fortunately, the visitor of to-day in India may transport himself back through the centuries into those days of unsurpassed Oriental splendor and achievement, for the ruins of former greatness in mosques and monuments remain to this day. He may also visit marble palaces and tombs still intact in their exquisite loveliness. If our traveler in northern India, especially in the vicinity of the ancient capital of Delhi, possess any imagination his stay will mean living over again the days of his childhood when there was nothing common or unclean, but everything took on the glory of another world. The Arabian Night's Entertainment here becomes real and we look for Aladdin and his wonderful lamp in yonder beautiful marble palace. And where is the magic carpet? We stand in the royal ladies' private room, where mysterious holes in the wall used to hide their priceless jewels, and find ourselves peeping through

the marble screen to see perchance the beautiful ladies themselves. There are the gorgeous baths, the fountains, the palm trees, the mosques, the turbaned worshiper. Under this environment time itself seems to vanish and we live once more in the strange old world of the Moguls.

There is an ancient ruin eleven miles from Delhi, the mosque built by Kutb-un-din, the first of the Slave kings, who took the throne at Delhi in 1206. This mosque was doubtless made over from an old Hindu temple, the finely carved pillars of which stand to-day in a kind of solitary splendor. Remnants of richly carved screens and several magnificent arches tell us that an eye-witness, who actually saw the mosque about one hundred and fifty years after it was erected and pronounced it without equal anywhere, must have had good reason for his sweeping statement. Just at the right of the mosque is the great tower of victory, the Kutb Minar. Looming up two hundred and thirty-eight feet and commanding a view of the whole region for miles in every direction, this magnificent tower seems to typify the Moslem domination of ancient India. "The Kutb Minar," declares James Fergusson, the famous architectural authority, "both in design and finish far surpasses any building of its class in the whole world"; and comparing it with the famous Campanile of Florence, he adds that the Italian tower "wants that poetry of design and exquisite finish of detail which mark every molding

of the Minar." It is built of red sandstone and marble and divided into five stories. Up its seemingly endless spiral steps we climbed one February evening to the very summit itself, that we might see a glorious Indian sunset. As we looked down upon the arches of broken beauty just below and then far off toward the horizon, noting here and there the dome of an ancient tomb or a Moslem minaret, in a dream we seemed to hear the loud voice of the muezzin across the lapse of seven hundred years cry out from this very summit: "Allahu Akbar!"—God is most great. It is the evening call to prayer, and as he repeats this opening phrase four times and then follows with emphatic repetitions, "I bear witness that there is no God but God, I bear witness that Mohammed is the apostle of God. Come to prayer, come to prayer, come to the Refuge, come to the Refuge. God is most great," we see in imagination the hordes of believers with their prayer carpets pouring down yonder dusty road to the entrance of the mosque, while the voice of the ancient crier dies away with the undying truth "There is no God but God."

Aside from the beauties of nature itself in India, Mohammedanism is to be credited with the most worthy artistic contributions of which the country can boast. A visit to the Forts of Delhi and Agra, with their beautiful marble mosques, palaces, and halls, is like a refreshing draught from a pure, cold spring after trying in vain to find some eternal

meaning in the tawdry temples of Hindu Benares. What is the secret of the Moslem love of the beautiful and the splendid artistic contributions of the Mohammedans to India? Why did the Moguls enlist the best architects obtainable at home and then send across the seas to far away Italy and France to summon to their mighty tasks the finest talent they could command? These questions simply indicate the fact that there is always a vital connection between religion and art. The riches of Europe in painting, sculpture, and cathedral can be credited only to the great religious convictions of men, in a period of intensest idealism. So in India the Moslem, with his one tremendous truth of the unity of God and a reach beyond the bounds of material things into a vast and mysterious eternity, sought not only to express his ideal by word of mouth but also by marble symbol as well. Thus he brought to India a new meaning and left the imprint of an infinite beauty there.

We ought to know the Moguls better, for they were great men. Hear their names: Babar, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, representing a dynasty of almost two hundred years (1526–1707), the golden age of Mohammedanism in India. Without doubt Akbar was the greatest of these rulers. Indeed, he ranks among the greatest of the world's sovereigns since history began. He is buried at Sikandra, near Agra, where it was our privilege to visit his

tomb in company with a friend who had lived in India all her life. As she talked of the man, weaving in the gossip and tradition of the people with the facts actually recorded in his written biography, Akbar became a very real figure and seemed to live again in the flesh. His mausoleum is one of the finest in India, constructed, like the Kutb Minar, entirely of red sandstone and marble. White minarets and towers add to the exterior beauty of the tomb, while the interior is exquisitely frescoed in rich blue and gold. The fourth, or top, floor is built entirely of marble, with splendid screens, through which the wind moans the endless requiem of the dead over the marble cenotaph of Akbar, whereon are engraved the ninety-nine names for God, among which the word "Father" is characteristically missing. Near by is a marble pillar on which it is said once rested the famous Kohinor diamond. Akbar was crowned in 1556, and though he could neither read nor write, he had a singularly clear intellect. His administration was characterized by military successes and real revenue reforms. With a leaning toward democracy, he safeguarded the interests of the poor and oppressed and was a true friend to the Hindus. He also was a student of comparative religions, devoted much time to the consideration of the various creeds of the world, and sought interviews with leaders of other faiths, striving always to glean the best truths from each. This attitude of mind soon resulted in a gradual

breaking away from the orthodox Mohammedan view, so that in the latter part of his life he came to be a pure theist, with warm sympathies for Parseeism. It is also affirmed that he leaned strongly toward Roman Catholicism, a tendency accounted for, according to tradition, by the influence of his wife, Miriam, who was said to have been a Portuguese Christian.

The World's Most Beautiful Building

Another of the Mogul line of famous princes was Shah Jahan, the builder of the Taj Mahal. No visitor to India can afford to miss Agra and this finest building in the world. Writers literally have exhausted their vocabularies in descriptions of the tomb of the Princess Mumtaz-i-Mahal, and the story of the love of the great Mogul for his favorite wife has been told the world around. Mumtaz-i-Mahal died in 1629, and soon afterwards the prince began to build her tomb, but the work was not completed until about 1650. One gets some idea of the size of the undertaking from the amount of money expended in the erection of this unique monument, for Shah Jahan literally gave a fortune to the memorial of his beloved princess. It is variously estimated that the Taj Mahal cost between six and ten million dollars. But the mere statement of money expenditure by no means gives an adequate estimate of the whole cost. There was also an investment of intellect, time, and physical labor almost beyond the im-

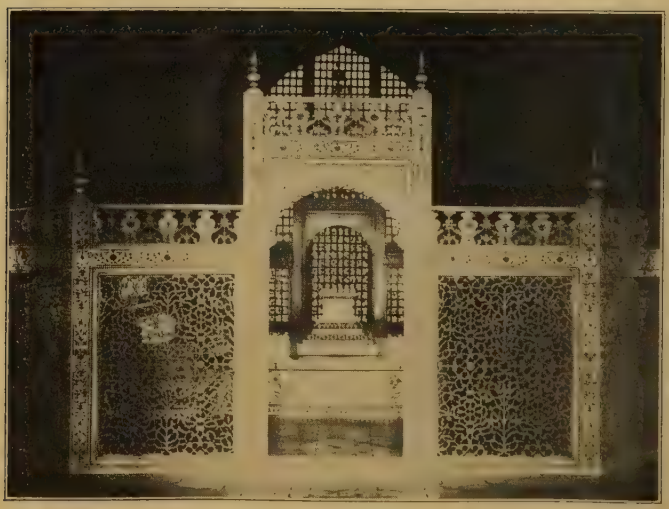
agination of modern man. In the story of the Taj the element of romance has always been stressed, and the appeal has been to the artistic and sentimental sides of our nature. There are, however, in connection with the erection of this beautiful tomb some sad facts of which we seldom hear. They constitute a terrible tale of cruelty and oppression. Shah Jahan spent over twenty years on this enterprise, employing the artist Verroneo of Venice for the designing and Augustin de Bordeaux of France for the decorations. And now comes the story of anguish and blood, for the prince, unlike the great Akbar, had no sense of pity for the poor, no democratic instincts. Twenty-two thousand laborers were compelled to work without pay in the construction of the tomb, the sole wage accorded to this forced labor being their food, which consisted only of bread. Consider the agonies borne by these poor unfortunates that the great Mogul might outstrip the world in a monument to his beloved. The countless loads of marble used in its construction had to be dragged by slow ox teams over the burning sands of India from Jaipur, and tons of red sandstone from Fatehpur Sikri. Underfed, overworked, stricken with the heat, these miserable slaves died like flies under the scourges of cholera, plague, and smallpox. The remedy was an easy one. The cruel prince simply ordered the sick to be removed and new laborers forced into their places. Such is the story you may hear in Agra, where

the unwritten history of the Taj Mahal has been passed down through the generations. Such terrible realism tempers in a measure the idealistic story of the "Marble Dream," but the lessons of democracy are as important as those of art.

The beauty of the Taj Mahal is not altogether Moslem, for the British authorities in recent years have given the famous tomb a setting truly magnificent. The garden with a fine arrangement of trees and flowers, the pool and the fountains combine to enhance its grandeur, while an arched gateway of darker stone screens the tomb itself from the view of the visitor until the glory of it all bursts suddenly upon him. With old Rham Sai, a native Methodist minister, we passed under that arch and caught the vision beautiful. Starting from where we stood and leading between two rows of cypress trees was a marble-inclosed pathway of water that seemed to invite our eyes not to rest in its own crystal depths but to travel on to the greater splendors beyond. Who can ever forget the lifting of the eyes and that first wonderful sight of the Taj? There it stands in all its majestic whiteness like some magic palace of another world. One is not disappointed. Generally the imagination in a case of this kind has been stimulated beforehand to such a pitch of expectancy that the actual experience brings a depressing reaction. It is not so with the Taj Mahal, for its beauty literally beggars description. It is said that the Moguls "designed like Titans and finished like

jewelers." The first view of this wonderful tomb stirs this titanic thrill of awe as the spectator contemplates the majestic proportions of the great masterpiece. It stands on a raised marble platform in the midst of four graceful minarets. Just before us is the great arched doorway flanked on either side by four similar but smaller arches in double arrangement, while towering majestically into the sky is the great white dome, rising from the midst of a group of four smaller ones to complete the perfect symmetry. Such a brief description, however, can by no means give an adequate idea of this wonderful building, for the very terms are structural, mechanical, while the Taj Mahal is a living thing. See it at noonday all white and dazzling under the blazing sky; see it grow sad and somber under the clouds; see it in the late afternoon and watch its changing glories when the sun is sinking in the golden west; see the Taj under the brilliant stars of an Oriental sky bathed in a flood of moonlight. Only by such companionship can one sense its vital and eternal meaning. We walk under the great arch and into the tomb itself to find another kind of beauty in the richness and exquisiteness of finished detail. Here is a marvelous blend of brown and violet marbles with the white to relieve the glare and a combination of pierced marble screens in the lofty domes to soften the strong Indian light. The delicate inlay work of agate and jasper, the ornamentation of precious stones, the lacework screen

THE TAJ MAHAL



MARBLE SCREEN AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TAJ MAHAL

of marble at the entrance reveal the artist's infinite pains. The building within has one central octagonal chamber around which are grouped other smaller rooms. In this central chamber under the dome lie the tombs of Mumtaz-i-Mahal, the princess, and Shah Jahan himself. It is said that the prince intended to build another tomb for himself, a Taj of black marble just across the river from the Taj Mahal, but his son, realizing the tremendous expense of the undertaking, interfered, so that this dream was never realized. The Great Mogul was stricken in the year 1658, and as he was about to die commanded the attendants to carry his couch up to an open tower on the marble palace overlooking the Jumna. Here his dying eyes beheld for the last time the tomb of his beloved on the distant horizon. Soon afterward they carried his body out to the beautiful garden to rest forever by her side.

Some Modern Reformers

We turn now from this era of extraordinary Mohammedan power, these days of luxury and wonderful art, to get another glimpse of the great Moslem missionary movement in India. What of the present state of the faith? What is the outlook for the future? These questions bring before us directly the bearing of Mohammedan growth and progress not only upon the life of the empire, but indirectly upon that of the whole world. With the death of Akbar II, in 1806, the

power of the Moguls in India practically came to an end and an era of Moslem decline ensued. Then during a period of more than fifty years the Mohammedans had to drink their cup of bitterness, for they saw their own faith weakening and their dream of world conquest fading, while the hated Hindus, over whom they had ruled, were gaining the ascendency over them. About 1870, however, there began a theological and educational movement due largely to the efforts of Sir Saiyad Ahmed Khan, an exceptionally brilliant Moslem who had been in the government service and had published a discriminating pamphlet on The Causes of the Indian Mutiny. To this man is due largely the modern advance along worthy lines of Indian Mohammedanism. He gave a rationalistic interpretation of the Koran and conceded the large human element in its revelation. He even wrote a commentary on the Bible in which he admitted its authenticity, though he declared his unbelief in miracles. He edited The Reform of Morals, a magazine devoted to higher ethical and social ideals for Islam. The most far-reaching work of his life, however, was the founding of a college at Aligarh, for here he succeeded in starting a really high-grade institution that soon became the center of the liberal Moslem movement. Saiyad Ahmed Khan's dominating interest, however, was theological and all his moral, educational, and social reform efforts grew out of and took color from his liberal views. Thus the

great Moslem missionary movement in India took a turn contrary to the whole genius and spirit of Islam, and seemed to promise a salutary change of plan and purpose.

The inherent fanaticism of the faith, however, would not allow such an expression of viewpoint to go unchallenged. We hear, therefore, within the first decade of this new movement of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Quadian, who claimed to be the promised Messiah of the Koran. He taught a mingled doctrine. There were both liberal and conservative elements in his theology, and his bitterness toward Christian missions doubtless influenced him in both his interpretations of the Koran and in his criticisms of Jesus Christ. Still he was a man of considerable intellectual ability and a shrewd judge of human nature. His magazine The Review of Religions received appreciative commendations even from such a leader as Tolstoy, who said of it, "The ideas are very profound and true." Toward the latter part of his life unmistakable evidences of the fraudulent nature of his prophecies and claims began to show themselves. He died in 1908, but his life left its impress in an organization called the Ahmadiya, numbering some fifty thousand persons. His book, The Teachings of Islam, is interesting in its revelation of Hindu, liberal Moslem, and especially Christian influences at work upon a mind naturally of the conservative type. For example, here is a statement embodying both Eastern

mysticism and Christian teaching: "Is it true that mere logic and philosophy may open for us the doors which experience tells us only can be opened by the powerful hand of God? Not at all; mere human devices can never reveal to us the shining face of the living and supporting God. Let him who would walk on the right path first of all completely submit himself with all his faculties and powers to the will of God, and then pray unceasingly and untiringly for the Divine union, and thus realize the truth of Divine existence through Divine assistance."[9]

And this sounds very much like Saint James: "As trees would wither away if they were not watered, so faith without good deeds is dead. Faith without deeds is useless, and good deeds not actuated by faith are a mere show."[10] Mirza Ghulam Ahmed's doctrine of heaven and hell also is somewhat of an improvement over the materialistic teachings of the Koran as interpreted by the earlier followers of the Prophet, for he says: "In short, heaven and hell, according to the Holy Koran, are images and representations of a man's own spiritual life in this world. They are not new material worlds which come from the outside. It is true that they shall be visible and palpable, call them material if you please, but they are only embodiments of the spiritual facts of this world."[11]

[9] The Teachings of Islam, by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, pp. 100, 101.
[10] Ibid., p. 113.
[11] Ibid., p. 144.

The doctrine of final judgment as elucidated in The Teachings of Islam also coincides with the Christian view: "The third world is the world of resurrection. In this world every soul, good or bad, virtuous or wicked, shall be given a visible body. The day of resurrection is the day of the complete manifestation of God's glory, when everyone shall become perfectly aware of the existence of God. On that day every person shall have a complete and open reward of his actions."[12] Recent years have seen a decided tendency back to orthodoxy, although the value of the liberal Moslem movement has by no means been entirely lost. An organization based on the more conservative theological views and the stricter interpretation of the Koran was formed in 1885. It was called "The Society for the Defense of Islam," and laid down a program both offensive and defensive. In 1894 another like organization was formed and now maintains a central office at Lucknow. Its chief work has been the organization and maintenance of a school of theology in that city and the encouragement of similar undertakings elsewhere in India, for the Moslems recently have begun to train professional preachers and missionaries. In these schools the Koran and modern science are "harmonized," and it is even taught that the early Mohammedans anticipated many of our modern discoveries and inventions. These theologians,

[12] Ibid., p. 136.

moreover, deny that there is any causal connection between the many worthy elements of Western civilization and the teachings of Christianity.

Recent Practical Movements

With such theological shiftings and readjustments, largely in the direction of progress, have come some consequent changes of an ethical, educational, social, and political nature. These practical movements are of deep interest, for it is just here that we find the greatest weakness and need of Mohammedanism. Moslem fanaticism through the centuries has stood in the way of the progress of civilization, as the history of the world has amply testified. This is no marvel, however, when one considers the hostile attitude toward education that has characterized Mohammedanism not only in the past but even in modern times. In India more than ninety-six per cent of adult Moslems are illiterate, but this is by no means the whole story, for the ninety-six per cent have had a training of bad environment, superstition, and fanaticism. So it is not strange that the Hindus have far outstripped the Mohammedans in educational matters. There can be no hope for Islam in India or anywhere else in the world unless educational provisions are made for its teeming millions. The tragic neglect and abuse of childhood lies at the root of the Moslem peril. Consider the home atmosphere, that first

and most potent influence to which every child is subject. Among the Mohammedans we find polygamy, divorce, sensuality, deceit, and a host of other evils. Add to these the prevalence of Oriental diseases, the dirt and squalor, the utter lack of discipline, and the home life of the Moslems is a sorry spectacle. Nevertheless, this environment constitutes the first stage in the training of child life. Is it any wonder that Islam has been such an obstructing force in the progress of the world? The marvel is that its harm has been so limited in extent. The home life of the Mohammedan child, however, does not last long in most instances, and other pernicious forces soon begin to work upon him. Child marriage is an institution not only of the Hindus but of the Mohammedans as well. Likewise child labor in its worst forms is found throughout Islam, for in many cases whole families are supported by the labor of these little ones. Such systematic training as most Mohammedan children receive consists largely of the memorization of prayers. In the schools it is also a program of memorization. With endless drilling the boys are taught to repeat the entire Koran, but the process is a purely verbal one, for they get but little of its meaning. In more advanced institutions the same method is applied to grammar, history, and other studies, so that the boy emerges from his school life with a well-trained memory faculty, but without thought life. Because of the low estimate of women among

the Mohammedans for the most part no provision is made for the education of girls.

Indian Mohammedanism, however, is awakening to its educational weakness. Aiyed Ahmed Kahn saw the situation clearly and had the courage to point out the worthlessness of the program of religious memory work and the disaster sure to ensue unless Moslems changed front and welcomed the science and methods of the West. He undertook the mighty task and accomplished much in his day. It was he who started the Mohammedan Educational Conference, a body that meets annually in India. Largely through the influence of this organization provision is now being made in a few places for female education, notably at Lucknow and Lahore. The significance of this radical departure from old customs will appear when we realize that in India only four Moslem women in every thousand can read. Aiyed Ahmed Kahn's college at Aligarh has pioneered the way for higher education among Indian Mohammedans. It is founded on the principles of religion, liberally interpreted, and seeks to be true to the best teachings of the Prophet, but it also offers a modern curriculum and follows accredited educational methods. Out of this institution are going Islam's future leaders in India.

From the ethical and social viewpoint, as from the educational, the picture is a dark one so far as the Moslem world is concerned, though it must be conceded that there is more hope in the Indian

situation than there is elsewhere. The outstanding shame of the faith is the condition of womanhood. Mohammed himself had thirteen wives, and, according to the teaching of the Koran, a follower of the Prophet is allowed four wives and as many concubines as his wealth may permit. But this indorsement and practice of polygamy is not the only evil. Along with it as a corollary goes great freedom in the matter of divorce. When a husband can secure separation from his wife by simply pronouncing the word "divorce" what chance is there for the development of womanhood and family life? Some Moslems by exercising this right have married as many as thirty or forty wives in a lifetime. The practice of rigid seclusion of woman has also contributed to her degradation by keeping her in ignorance and out of touch with life and progress. During a visit to a mission hospital in the city of Bareilly we saw this fact illustrated in a striking contrast. Here with us one day was a group of a dozen fine native Christian nurses cooperating with the physicians in a service for humanity and finding high expression for their lives in the perfect freedom that modern civilization brings to woman. But as we crossed the inner court we passed a portico where were seated a group of Mohammedan women. As soon as they realized our presence they immediately began to hang a great curtain across the front of the entrance, thus shutting themselves away from the outside world.

The act was typical of just what Mohammedanism has done for woman. It has shut her out from the activity, progress, and service of the world and has shut her up to unutterable ignorance, misery, and degradation.

But it is encouraging to record that the position of women in Islam is slowly improving, especially in India, where the latest statistics show only a small percentage of the people practice polygamy and the leaders of the modern movement are outspoken in their condemnation of the evil. At the Lucknow Conference of Christian workers among Mohammedans, in 1911, Miss A. De Selincourt reported that there were thirty million Moslem women in India, among whom already have been organized a number of clubs and associations for the betterment of womanhood. She is also authority for the statement that a number of these ladies are lecturing on themes of social reform, and that others are editors of papers published in the interest of Moslem women. A conference of Moslem women which meets in connection with the yearly Mohammedan Educational Conference organized by Aiyed Ahmed Khan is especially concerning itself with the education of girls, an undertaking full of hope for the future.

Reference has already been made to child-marriage, which still continues as a shameful Moslem institution, bringing literal death and destruction in its train. Terrible as is this union

A MOHAMMEDAN SCHOOL IN BOMBAY

MOHAMMEDAN SCHOOL CHILDREN

of immature children, the Mohammedan practice of marrying little girls to men old enough to be their fathers is far more horrible. It is no wonder in view of this evil and other conditions of immorality and filth, that infant mortality in Moslem countries ranges from sixty to as high as eighty-five per cent. In India the evil has been somewhat modified by increasing the minimum marriage limit for girls from ten years to twelve, though this governmental regulation is very frequently disregarded. However, the more progressive Mohammedans are heartily ashamed of the institution, and their leaders are attempting in every way to mold sentiment for the complete abolition of the custom.

Child labor is another of the crying social evils to be found throughout the Orient, and Mohammedanism has had no word of protest against it. The children of the poor begin to work at a very early age and are robbed of proper physical and mental development. In Muttra we saw mere babes of four years gathering cow dung on the city streets and were informed that they received but four cents a day for their labor.

Diseases, especially those associated with loose sexual relations and the devastating tropical scourges, the plague, cholera, smallpox, besides tuberculosis, claim their victims by hundreds of thousands in India. The women and children, of course, succumb most quickly. The custom of secluding women, especially among the Moslems,

has a very direct connection with the awful death rate from tuberculosis among their females.

The Mohammedans are known as a temperance people and are very strict in their condemnation of the use of alcohol in all its forms. That they carry out their principles in the matter in actual practice was vividly illustrated one day when on a train in upper Bengal we were stopped by a freight wreck. We left our car and went ahead to see the overturned locomotive under which lay the dead body of the faithful engineer. Some one said, "The engineer must have been drunk." "No," quickly answered an Englishman standing near by, "that could not be true. He was a Mohammedan." Christian nations might well covet such a compliment as this remark implied. On these and other social questions, the Indian Moslems seem to be awakening, though in their theological thinking the movement, as has been elsewhere indicated, is toward a stricter orthodoxy.

The Future of Islam

A most important angle from which to study Islam in its practical aspects is that of its political ambitions and progress. There can be no doubt that Mohammed in his day desired to dominate neighboring countries as well as Arabia, and he also may have had an ambition to rule the entire world. Whatever may have been the case with the Prophet himself, however, Islam was not long in acquiring an insatiable

ambition for world conquest, and that, by the sword. Undreamed of success attended early efforts to this end, and within a hundred years after the death of its founder the undertaking was well under way. So rapidly have the Mohammedans continued to evangelize that to-day they number nearly two hundred and twenty-five million and the faith is still spreading and growing in extraordinary fashion. But with the increase in numbers has come a loss of political power, for Christian nations have so conquered the various countries in which Islam is represented, that more than three fourths of the followers of the Prophet are now living under the governmental control of the hated Christian dogs. But the old Arabian dream has not been forgotten, for out of all the bitter disappointments and frustrated hopes has come the modern cry of "Pan-Islam." The ancient fanatical spirit is by no means dead, though it expresses itself in a somewhat modern guise. In reality, however, this movement, if it is to mean anything, will necessarily have to take on a most reactionary form with an appeal to the infallible authority of the Koran, and a program of conquest by force. Mohammedan leaders of real insight are so few and the multitudes so ignorant, superstitious, and fanatical, that any program embodying high intellectual, ethical, and social ideals at this time would be entirely without any far-reaching appeal.

But is a modern "holy war" among the possibilities? The answer to the question must be affirmative, for the Moslem world is permeated with this wild fanaticism. During our winter in India just after the present European war began, there were frequent inklings of the disarmament of native military companies and of local uprisings. At Rangoon, a few days after the Singapore massacre in February, 1914, the Mohammedans appeared to be greatly agitated and gathered on the streets in crowds, doubtless excited by false rumors of a successful uprising in Malaysia. So the spirit of holy war still dominates Islam. But a revival of missionary propaganda by the sword is scarcely probable, and should it be undertaken, the issue would be certain failure. Lack of efficient leadership, wide differences of opinion as to the true interpretation of Mohammedan doctrine, diversity of national ideals, lack of organization, and most of all small hope of a favorable outcome for such a gigantic undertaking as the uprising of all Islam, besides many other considerations, would tend to disintegrate a movement of this kind, even if a Moslem war on the Christian world should be declared. There is always danger in prophecy, especially when the prophet fails to weigh concrete conditions and is led astray by abstractions. In view of the last two and a half years of history, no better illustration of this fact could be cited than the statement of Mr. Carl Peters, quoted by Pro-

fessor Vambery in The Nineteenth Century (October, 1906), and later by Dr. S. M. Zwemer in Islam: A Challenge to Faith (1907). This African traveler said: "There is one factor which might fall on our side of the balance and in the case of a world war might be made useful to us: that factor is Islam. As Pan-Islamism it could be played against Great Britain as well as against the French republic, and if German policy is bold enough, it can fashion the dynamite to blow into the air the rule of Western powers, from Cape Nun [Morocco] to Calcutta." Germany was "bold enough" to cultivate the friendship of the Turks, and many of the more ignorant Moslems were led to believe that the Kaiser had been converted to Mohammedanism. And holy war *was* proclaimed at the Mosque of Mohammed in Constantinople from which word was sent to every corner of the Moslem world. But the great uprising never materialized, and to-day Mohammedans are fighting each other in Europe just as are the Christians.

While, then, there is little prospect of a great armed conflict between the Christian nations and the Mohammedan world, yet there is still a "Moslem peril." It is the peril of ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism, with all their dire implications. It is the peril of retarded civilization and social injustice. The forces that make for life and light, therefore, need to be enlisted in a campaign of education and Christianization against

such a menace. Experience proves that many difficulties and comparatively meager results attend direct attempts toward the Christian evangelization of the Moslem world. But it also proves that indirectly through Christian governments, educational efforts, medical assistance, and social service the spirit of Mohammedanism can be changed for the better, and leaders within the faith can be enlisted to take up the task of purging their religion of its worst evils. In this method of indirection lies our largest hope for the millions of Moslems. The situation in India, moreover, is so far superior to that of Arabia, Egypt, Africa, and other Mohammedan countries as to reveal the true value of this method and to furnish a basis for an optimistic judgment for the future.

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CHAPTER VI

THE FIRE WORSHIPERS

Now I proclaim to you the Most High of all.—
Zoroaster.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRE WORSHIPERS

PROBABLY no religion in the world presents so many similarities to our own faith as does Zoroastrianism. In view of this fact, and that we may get a more vivid impression of the beliefs and practices of that sect, our study of this religion will be thrown into the form of a conversation between a wealthy Parsee scholar and his friend, a Christian tourist visiting India for the first time. The Parsee has just arrived at the Taj Mahal Hotel in the city of Bombay for an early morning call, and the two start immediately for a day of sight-seeing, engaging meanwhile in an interesting discussion of the history, doctrines, and customs of the so-called Fire Worshipers. We will listen as they talk.

Parsee: Good morning and welcome to India. It seems almost an age since we last met in London five years ago. I hope you have had a good night's rest after your long journey from Madras, and that you enjoyed your *choata hazri.*[1] If you are not too tired, suppose we begin this morning to see Bombay. I would suggest that we walk to Malabar Hill first and view the famous Towers of Silence. This trip will also give us an unusual

[1] Early morning light breakfast.

opportunity for the discussion of Parseeism in its own environment.

Christian: I certainly am glad to see you again, for I confess that absence from America for more than two months without meeting a close friend has made me a little homesick. Your presence here this morning has already dissipated the gloom and I shall take a new interest in wonderful India. Let us start at once for Malabar Hill, as you suggest, and suppose on the way you begin by telling me something of the history of your faith.

Parsee: Very well. Let us walk out Lansdowne to Queen's Road, and thence to the Towers. You have asked about our history and I will try to outline it briefly. You know, of course, that our ancestors came originally from Persia. There lived many centuries before the birth of your Christ a prehistoric race on the plateau of the Hindu Kush. From this region, due doubtless to severe climatic changes, there took place two important migrations, one southward to India and another westward to what we now call Persia. The latter group formed the Persian empire and flourished there until the conquest of the land by the Arabs in A. D. 720. Following this event an era of dreadful Mohammedan persecution ensued, and some of these vanquished Persians abandoned their native land and emigrated to India, settling at first in Gujurat and later in and around the city of Bombay. This briefly

sums up the main facts as to the early history of the people called Parsees (Persians) now living in Western India.

Christian: Your account is most interesting, but you have not mentioned the name of your great Master, Zoroaster. I have read a little about him, but should like to hear from one of his followers the essential facts of his life. There is, I believe, some dispute as to the period in which he lived.

Parsee: You have anticipated me. I was just about to begin the story of Zoroaster or, Zarathushtra, as he is sometimes called. Yes, no one knows exactly when our great leader did live, but it is certain that he was a real historical character. Some writers claim that Zoroaster lived a thousand years, or even more, before Christ, but the probability is that he was born somewhere in northwest Persia about 589 and died about B. C. 513. Many myths and legends, such as those of his miraculous birth and works, have been handed down by tradition in connection with the life of this great man, but I will give you only a few of the best authenticated facts of his life. It is quite clear that much of the success of this leader was due to the fact that when he was about forty-two years of age he converted and enlisted in his cause King Vishtaspa, and later was able also to win Queen Hutaosa for the new faith. Through these and other influential patrons he was greatly helped in spreading and

organizing the new religion. It was King Vishtaspa who had the teachings of Zoroaster recorded on twelve thousand cowhides and deposited in a vault at Persepolis, where a specially appointed guard watched over them day and night. In spite of this friendship and encouragement, however, Zoroaster was opposed by the priestly classes, who condemned his purer teachings as the rawest heresy; the opposition soon developed into actual persecution, but through it all he kept his faith in God and remained true. Tradition says that he died a violent death at the hands of these priests.

Christian: You have given me a glimpse into Parsee history and have told me about Zoroaster. Now may I ask about your Bible? I believe you call your sacred literature the Zend Avesta.

Parsee: Strictly speaking, The Avesta, for "Zend" means interpretation or commentary, and this portion of our scriptures is not strictly speaking a part of the sacred writings. The Avesta, the real "book of knowledge," consists of five parts as follows: The Yasna, Vispered, Yashts, Vendidad, and the Khordah Avesta. Originally the literature upon which the Avesta is based was recorded on the twelve thousand cowhides of which I told you, but these were destroyed, according to tradition, by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, three centuries before Christ. Afterward a council of priests was called and our present sacred literature was reproduced from their remembrance

of the ancient documents. The Gathas are the most ancient writings of all. They form a part of the Yasna, and are considered to be direct revelations from God to Zoroaster. Our scriptures differ somewhat from yours in that they consist mainly of ritual, praise, and prayers, although, like your Old Testament, the Vendidad lays down multitudinous rules as to sacrifices, expiations, and purifications.

Christian: I read a book some time ago in which the author expressed it as his opinion that our Christian Bible was derived largely from ancient Persian literature. What is your judgment as to the truth of this?

Parsee: It is doubtless true that the teachings of the ancient Hebrews were affected to some extent, especially after the exile, by Persian influence, and that likewise Persian beliefs were modified by the doctrines of Israel. We shall see this more clearly as we note the similarities in the essential beliefs of the two systems. However, it is my judgment that the teachings of both the Hebrews and the Persians were wrought out in the main independently. Their likeness is, therefore, all the more striking. But when you compare the Vedas of the Brahmans with the Avesta, it appears quite conclusively that both came from one source, although in the actual development of these two faiths there are to be found many opposing elements.

Christian: You used the word "God" a moment

ago in connection with your discussion of the Avesta. Is it possible that you believe in a God similar to ours? You are called "Fire Worshipers," and I have understood that you were really devotees of nature.

Parsee: Ah, I see you have been misled just as thousands of others have through superficial observation or by reading critics like Dr. John Wilson. We are frequently but wrongly called "Fire Worshipers," for the fire that we keep burning in our fire temples and in our homes is simply a symbol—one of the best, we think—of God's glory and power. Likewise we consider earth, air, and water as expressions of his power and wisdom. Hence our great reverence for these four primal elements. It is quite possible, however, that our ancestors in the early dawn of history formed their religious conceptions from their observations of the various manifestations of nature, and that they personified sun, moon, stars, daylight and darkness, clouds, winds and storms, and the passing of the seasons. But it is also true that our religion to-day embodies conceptions of such a high ethical and spiritual order that they can in no sense be characterized as naturalistic, whatever may have been their source or the process of their development. Your own religion, I think you will admit, also is under this same law of growth. It may be interesting to you to know that there is a striking correspondence between Christianity and Zoroastrianism in

the supernatural beings that influence our lives. We believe in God as you do. Our name for him is Ahura Madza. We also believe in the devil. Our name for him is Ahriman. We also believe in angels, especially in those seven who act as the close and confidential ministers of Ahura Madza. Ahura Madza is the one Lord and Creator of the universe, all-wise and powerful, perfect, good-minded, and righteous in all his acts. Ahriman is a murderer, a liar, the great deceiver of mankind. The seven archangels are really personifications of the attributes of Ahura Madza and are constantly busy doing his will. They are Benevolent Mind, Perfect Holiness, Excellent Rulership, Devotion, the pair, Health and Immortality, and Obedience.

Christian: Your words interest me greatly and stir within me a desire to hear you discuss your principal beliefs. What is Parseeism in essence? Have you any statement of beliefs such as we have in our "Apostles' Creed"?

Parsee: If I were required to put in just one statement the faith of the Parsees, I would say "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds," for this is the essence of our religion. This is stated in a rather more elaborate form in our Confession of Faith and Creed which I will now quote for you. The Confession runs like this: "I am a worshiper of Ahura Madza, I am a Zoroastrian worshiper of Him. I agree to praise the Zoroastrian religion and to believe in that religion.

I praise good thoughts, I praise good words, I praise good deeds. I praise the good religion of Ahura Madza which allays dissensions and quarrels, which brings about kinship and brotherhood, which is holy, which is the greatest, the best, and most excellent of all religions that exist and that shall in the future exist, and which is the religion revealed by Ahura Madza to Zoroaster. I ascribe all good to Ahura Madza. This is the profession of the religion of Ahura Madza." Our Creed is very short, but I believe you will note at once its comprehensiveness: "I believe in the existence of Ahura Madza, the all-wise Lord; in the immortality of the soul and in our personal responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions."

Christian: Surely, no one could take exception to such fine ideals as these. They coincide exactly with the teachings of my own religion, but I should be glad to have you go a step farther and tell me how these noble ends are to be attained. Is it not true, as our Saint Paul once said, "The good that I would do I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do"? In just a word, what appeal does your religion make to the will that men may learn to *love* and *do* these things? Christianity centers, as you know, in Christ, and it is our belief that somehow when the Christian comes into vital relationship with him not only through the teachings and example of his life but also through his death and resurrection, a

new and stronger motive is born within the soul. This contact with Christ thus brings a fresh power into the life and puts the whole problem of religion on the plane of a friendship relation with love as the dominating motive. Without this we hold that righteousness may be formally but not vitally realizable. Have you any teaching in Parseeism corresponding to this?

Parsee: What you have just been saying has frequently been a subject of serious reflection with me. Our leading scholars all admit that Jesus Christ was a wonderful teacher and a most worthy example, and even in our own traditions there is a prophecy of a restoring Saviour who is to be born of a virgin in some later period of the world's life. Inspired by this Messianic hope, you will remember that our Magi made a pilgrimage all the way to Bethlehem to see your infant Jesus. Moreover, the value of motive and the need for a reenforcement of our weak human wills ought to be apparent to any thinking man. But the possibility of such a mystical union of the believer with Christ is hard for me to comprehend. Perhaps this is because the Parsees have always emphasized tremendously the practical side of religion and may thus have overlooked some of its deeper and more vital aspects. However, I will give you a quotation from our Catechism that sums up our whole view as to this matter of salvation:

"Question: Then, according to the teaching

of our religion, there is no saviour for one other than himself?

"Answer: Of course not. Every man is his own saviour. His deeds alone will bring out his salvation. A man is the architect of his own fortune. He is his own saviour."

Christian: That is very much like our "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." You stop at this point in your teaching, but we add, "for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." The first clause represents human endeavor and the second divine power. Thus salvation through Christ with us is a cooperative and necessary process.

Parsee: Yes, I follow your exposition and see the need of the larger motive. However, you must admit that we Parsees have a splendid record from the standpoint of progress and attainment in morals. You see our system throws the responsibility strongly on the individual, for every man knows that at the last he must stand on Chinvat Bridge.

Christian: What is Chinvat Bridge?

Parsee: It is the bridge that connects earth with heaven. On this bridge the final Judgment takes place. After death the Parsee's soul remains here in the world for three days. At the beginning of the third night he must appear at Chinvat Bridge before the angel Judge, Meher, who is assisted by two other angels, Rashne and Astad [Justice and Truth]. Meher holds in his

hands a pair of scales in which he scrupulously weighs the good and evil actions of the man's past life. If the good deeds outweigh the evil ones, he passes across the bridge into heaven. But if his evil deeds prove the heavier, he is cast off the bridge into the yawning abyss of hell beneath. If, however, the scales balance evenly, the soul is sent to Hamast-gehan, a place corresponding to the purgatory of the Roman Catholic faith. From this brief description of final judgment you have already seen how closely some of our fundamental beliefs approach those of Christianity. Take the doctrine of immortality, for example. This is very clearly wrought out even in the ancient Gathas. Indeed, it was more definitely taught by our ancestors than by the Hebrews prior to the birth of Jesus Christ. Our view of human life is also much the same as yours. In the outer world we see a great struggle going on between physical forces. In the inner world of the soul there is a like fierce conflict between spiritual forces. Struggle, then, is the order of the universe. Two principles are at war, the good and the evil, backed by the personalities Ahura Madza and Ahriman. So there is no Oriental fatalism in our religion, but an everlasting fight between the powers of darkness and those of light. To such an extent has this philosophy of life been emphasized in Zoroastrianism that critics say our system hopelessly breaks down and that this dualism can never be reconciled.

Ahura Madza has a rival in Ahriman, and, therefore, our God is not all-powerful. But such a view reveals a lack of sympathetic understanding of our teaching. Ahura Madza is the all-powerful One behind the two opposing principles of good and evil. The latter he uses to work out his purposes of righteousness. Ahriman is neither omniscient nor almighty, and whatever limitations may appear in the being of Ahura Madza are self-imposed for the sake of his creative moral purpose. You also have a God and a devil in your own religion, and it seems to me that Christians likewise, if they hold that the devil is the author of evil, are open to this same criticism.

Christian: While your charge of dualism as against Christianity would not be admitted by all our Christian thinkers, your discussion shows me that you believe in the fact of sin and that our lives are in a constant struggle with temptation. Please tell me what part man plays in this scheme of things. Is he just an automaton taking a fatalistic part in a dumb show, or has he freedom of choice and is the struggle serious and real?

Parsee: The struggle is real and man is a free moral agent to choose or reject the right. As to sin we believe that it grows in its influence and dire consequences with the passage of time. The same law holds for righteousness. Hence the Zoroastrians exhort young men to choose the right early in life, that their good deeds may accumulate before they are called to stand on

Chinvat Bridge. Forgiveness is offered in return for the expiation of offenses by penances. Of these penances flagellation and offerings of the materials used in worship were the most common in the old days. Some sins, especially those having to do with the contamination of earth, fire, or water with dead bodies, are unforgivable. It is noteworthy, however, that if a heathen commit even one of these deadly sins and afterward with true repentance becomes a convert to Zoroastrianism, his guilt is thereby covered.

Christian: And what are the Parsee notions of heaven and hell? Are these actual places or only states of the soul?

Parsee: Our theology, as you have already gathered, is highly practical and ethical, none the less do we place large emphasis upon the inner soul-condition resulting from the observance or non-observance of spiritual laws. But the Avesta teaches also that there are such places as heaven and hell. Heaven is described as a place of everlasting and ineffable glory, while hell is one of torments where the sinner reaps the consequences of his deeds much after the fashion of the condemned in Dante's Inferno.

Christian: Among some Christian theologians there is much debate as to whether or not there is to be a second probation in the world hereafter for earth's finally impenitent. What is the Parsee view on this point?

Parsee: Hell and heaven with us are only tem-

porary arrangements, so to speak. At the appointed time the Saviour to whom I have already made reference will come, and all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, shall rise and assume once more their bodily form. Afterward the fire will melt the metal of the mountains into a great stream in which all are made pure. Ahura Madza will then throttle Ahriman, and hell itself shall be purged with the molten metal. Finally all persons and things having been thus purified, the world is to be restored and the time condition forever destroyed. The present order of things will thus become eternal, and all human beings blessed forevermore.

Christian: Well, we have devoted considerable time to theological doctrines. Let us now turn for a while to the ceremonial side of your religion. Will you not describe some of these ceremonies and also interpret their meaning, for I find that careless observers frequently do a religious sect great injustice by their hasty conclusions as to the significance of certain peculiar rites, the symbolism of which entirely escapes them.

Parsee: Yes, what you say is true, and I sometimes think that Parseeism has suffered most of all from the type of critics you mention. Yonder is Malabar Hill, but I will have time to tell you something about our principal ceremonies before we reach the Towers. The Naojote ceremony is the initiation of a Parsee child into the fold of Zoroastrianism. It corresponds to your

A PARSEE TOWER OF SILENCE

rites of baptism or confirmation. The symbols used in this ceremony are two, the sudrah or sacred shirt, and the kusti, or sacred thread. A true Zoroastrian must always wear these two articles except when he bathes. When the Parsee child reaches the age of seven the priest is called to the home and the ceremony of investiture with these symbols takes place. The child, after the sacred bath, is called upon to recite the Declaration of Faith and then assumes the sacred shirt. Next comes a joint recital of a prayer by priest and child, both facing the rising or the setting sun, after which the sacred thread is tied about the novitiate's waist. He then recites the Articles of Faith, and the ceremony is completed. The rite, however, is full of meaning, The shirt is made of two different pieces of cloth, one for the front part and the other for the back. They represent the past and the future and enforce, on the one hand, our duties to our ancestors and superiors and, on the other, our obligations to the coming generations and our inferiors. Just below the throat on the shirt there is a bag or purse to remind us of the virtue of industry in money matters and also of our duty to accumulate good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The thread is even more complex in its symbolism. It is really a belt woven out of seventy-two smaller threads which are separated at the ends into three tassels each with twenty-four threads. The seventy-two threads stand for the seventy-

two chapters of the Yasna. The twenty-four threads of each tassel represent the twenty-four parts of the Visparad. The hollow of the belt symbolizes the space between earth and heaven. The twisting recalls the blending of the material and spiritual elements in human life. Even the lamb's wool of which the belt is made and the weaving have significance. As a constant reminder of his duties the Parsee is required to untie and retie the belt five times a day at specified intervals. In general, the girding of the body with the sacred thread signifies the readiness of the Zoroastrian to work for God and to do his full duty.

Another ceremony in which you will be interested, I am sure, is that of marriage. Elements from both the Hindus and the English, as well as many popular customs, have modified this ceremony, but the teachings of our Persian ancestors are still distinguishable, especially in its strictly religious parts. The priests, because of their extensive acquaintance with the people, are the match-makers of the Parsees, and furnish suggestions and recommendation to the parents of the boy who is seeking marriage. The matter is then followed up and the astrologer is consulted. If, after a careful examination of the horoscopes of both the boy and girl in question, he makes a favorable decision there is a betrothal, followed later by the wedding. If, however, he finds a lack of harmony in the horoscopes, he makes a negative

decision and the negotiations are dropped at once. There is no particular ceremony marking the engagement of a couple beyond the exchange of presents of clothing, but such an engagement is held as sacredly binding. At the convenience of the parties concerned and when, with the help of the astrologer, a lucky day has been selected, the marriage is celebrated. Large parties are held on the day of the wedding at the homes of both the bride and the bridegroom. Then just at sunset those who have gathered at the home of the bridegroom proceed with him to the bride's home, where the marriage ceremony takes place in the evening. The bridegroom is dressed in a white ceremonial flowing robe and carries on his arm a shawl, as a token of respect. Both bride and bridegroom wear garlands of flowers about their necks, and on the forehead of the former appears a round spot of red paint; on the bridegroom's forehead there is a long vertical mark of the same color. Like your Christian marriage ceremony, elements of both a practical and popular sort as well as of strictly religious nature make up a Parsee wedding. Of the popular customs several might be mentioned. Hand-fastening consists in tying the right hands of the couple together as they sit opposite each other separated only by a curtain. The marriage knot is made by binding a piece of cloth seven times around the two chairs of the bride and groom and finally knotting the ends. Dropping

the curtain takes place after the hand-fastening and marriage-knot ceremonies have been completed by the two officiating priests. Each of these acts symbolizes the new unity emerging from the old separateness. Another marriage custom like those of your own country is rice-throwing. The bride and groom are each given a few grains of rice in their left hands while the right hands remain bound together. The one who succeeds first in throwing his rice over the head of the other will lead in loving and respecting his mate. All this is followed by the formal religious service, in which prayers are said, benedictions are pronounced, and certain questions asked and answered. Two questions are asked by the officiating priests of the witnesses and one of the contracting parties. The witness for the bridegroom must answer affirmatively the following:

"In the presence of this assembly that has met together in ——— on ——— day ——— month of the year ——— of Emperor Yazdgard of the Sassanian dynasty of auspicious Iran, say whether you have agreed to take this maiden ——— by name, in marriage for this bridegroom in accordance with the rites and rules of the followers of Ahura Madza, promising to pay her two thousand dirams of pure white silver and two dinars of real gold of Nishapore coinage."

The witness for the bride is then called upon to answer affirmatively this question:

"Have you and your family with righteous

mind and truthful thoughts, words, and actions and for the increase of righteousness agreed to give, forever, this bride in marriage to ———."

Then the priest turns to the couple and says, "Have you preferred to enter into this contract of marriage up to the end of your life with righteous mind?" To which both reply, "I have preferred." The service closes with an address by the priests.

Christian: I begin to see from your outline of these two ceremonies that your faith is, indeed, full of symbolism, and the reasons for the prevalent misconception of the meaning of your fire-worship becomes clearer. By the way, will you not explain this peculiar rite? I think you will have time to do this before we reach the steps leading up the Hill.

Parsee: I will do better than explain the matter. It is still early and I think that by going a little out of our way to one of the fire temples I can actually show you this unique type of worship. We will turn off, then, here at this street. Now, let me repeat what I said earlier in our conversation, that the Parsees do not worship the actual fire, but the God whose glory and power this pure element best symbolizes. Please remember also that in the Mosaic days of your religion fire occupied much the same place in the thought of the Hebrews as it now does with us. The Lord appeared to Moses on Mount Horeb "in a flame of fire." The Ten Commandments were

given to Moses when the Lord descended upon Sinai "in fire." There was a pillar of fire to guide the children of Israel in the wilderness. Indeed, this expression of God's power and presence by fire is quite common in the Old Testament. So we are reminded of God as we stand before the rising or the setting sun and as we worship with the sacred flame in our homes or the altars of our fire temples. Of course many of the more ignorant of our people may worship the sun itself and the sacred flame itself, but this idolatrous tendency is not a peculiarity of any religion. It is common to all. Even in your Christian ceremony of baptism with water it is not at all unusual for people to rest in the symbol rather than in the spiritual meaning of the sacrament. I sometimes have heard ignorant Christians speak of the water as saving the soul. But we are now approaching the temple, and I see that it is open, so we will step inside. Ah, there is a priest sitting in his pure, white robe, the kusti wound around his waist, and near by stands the vase with the sacred flame burning there on the ashes.

Christian: What is that cloth the priest has fastened over his mouth and nose?

Parsee: That is intended to protect the holy fire from the contamination of his breath, for we believe that this element must not be defiled by anything impure. See the priest has begun the service. He is going to make the Haoma sacrifice. On that stone table are the various

utensils used in this peculiar worship—the fire tongs, ladle, knife, sticks, and the mortar and pestle. The Haoma juice, like the Soma of the Hindus, was thought by our fathers to possess divine power because of its intoxicating properties. To-day, however, the Haoma sacrifice is purely symbolical, as you see. The priest there has "shown to the fire" the little cup of Haoma juice and is now himself taking a sip of it. Watch him as he presents the offerings, that small cup of milk, and those cakes and fruits, to the fire. This whole ceremony is supposed to be very efficacious in overcoming evil. You see it is all very simple, but to us Parsees it is full of spiritual meaning. Now excuse me a moment as I have a duty to perform before leaving the temple. I must secure a little of the ashes of the holy fire and apply it to my forehead, for this reminds me of the brevity of human life and that all things must finally return to the dust again.

Christian: How like our Christian ceremony in the burial service, where the minister says, "Ashes to ashes"!

Parsee: Yes, much as we differ on many points of doctrine, men of all religions are at one as they face the universal fact of death and contemplate the extreme brevity of human life. But let us leave the temple now and make our way back to Malabar Hill. Speaking of death, I think we shall see a funeral this morning, for unless I am mistaken they will carry the body

of a prominent Parsee merchant who died last night to the Towers this morning. On our way to the Hill let me describe some of our customs connected with death. When a Parsee is approaching the end two priests are summoned to recite at his bedside the prayer of repentance and to give him a sip of the Haoma juice that has been consecrated at a fire temple. Immediately after death the body is carefully washed and other sanitary precautions taken to avoid infection. Two watchers are placed in charge of the corpse and, in accordance with the command of the Avesta, a dog is brought in to view it. This act is variously interpreted. Some say it is used as a test, for the dog will not look at the body unless life be extinct. Others say the visit of the dog symbolizes the loyalty that should exist between the living and the dead. After the visit of the dog the sacred fire in a vase is brought and placed at the side of the body. From this time until the corpse is taken to the Towers a priest sits before the fire and recites passages from the Avesta. Finally the body is carried from the house on an iron framework by two corpse-bearers and the funeral procession starts for Malabar Hill, the relatives and friends marching always in pairs. At every stage of the funeral ceremony all the participants take part two by two, thus symbolizing the interdependence and the need of sympathy and mutual aid in our human existence. But here comes the funeral

of which I spoke just rounding that hill. We will follow them at a little distance up the steps and into the inclosure where you see those five Towers of Silence. You will doubtless notice that all these people are clothed in white, for this is our sign of mourning. There, they have now reached the Tower and the bearers have placed the bier on the ground and are uncovering the face of the dead man, that the mourners may take a last look at their friend. Let us go down this path that we may get a better view and also that I may explain by means of yonder model of the interior of the tower what is to take place next. See they have covered the face again and are now carrying the corpse through that little doorway into the tower. You know, of course, that no one is allowed to enter it except these corpse-bearers, who take great precautions to cleanse and disinfect themselves after each funeral. Now I must explain what is going on within the tower by means of this model. You see here are three concentric circles of shallow stone receptacles for bodies and little pathways between the circles. The outside circle is for males, the middle circle for females, and the inner one for children. In the very center of the tower is a deep well, and toward this there is a gentle slope from the circumference. Of course the tower is without cover and entirely open to the sky. The corpse-bearers are now stripping the body and laying it stark naked in

one of the receptacles in the outer circle. I know this because those hundreds of vultures that have been waiting on the limbs of the trees and on the walls of the other towers are beginning to fly down into this one. See, the two men already are coming out through the door. Within about an hour the vultures will have stripped the flesh entirely from the body, leaving only the bare skeleton.

Christian: What a horrible way of disposing of the dead!

Parsee: No more horrible than your own custom of burying the dead in the earth to let the worms slowly feed on the corpse through a period of several years. The reason why our method makes such a revolting impression on you is because the destruction of the body happens in a very short space of time and practically before your very eyes. It is largely a difference in the time element between the two processes that makes you exclaim against our custom. Indeed, our way of disposing of the dead is far more sanitary than yours, and provides, moreover, more carefully for the protection of the living than does the Christian method of burial.

Christian: Well, now that I think of the matter from your viewpoint, I begin to see some reason in it. What happens to the skeleton left behind by the vultures?

Parsee: When it is perfectly bleached and dry the attendants will push it into the well, where it

will crumble away under the action of quick lime and phosphorus. An elaborate system of drainage by means of sandstone and charcoal filters connected with the well thoroughly absorbs what is left and thus all chances of contamination are eliminated. The mourners will soon return to their homes, and after washing their hands and faces will recite prayers for the mercy of Ahura Madza upon the spirit of the deceased. On the fourth day after the funeral there will be a feast and a special service at the Fire Temple. The entire period of mourning will last for about a month.

Christian: I appreciate your coming with me to see these famous Towers of Silence, but I am afraid that I have consumed considerable of your precious time. It is now nearly noon by my watch. There is, however, one more question for which I wish you would furnish me an answer. You know that modern philosophy is proposing what appears to be a new, though in reality it is very old, test of values. It teaches that we must no longer estimate the worth of any system of teaching in an abstract way, but by studying how the principles express themselves in life. "Will it work?" is the question of our day. Judged by such an experimental test, what are the worthy fruits of Parseeism?

Parsee: Yes, after all, there is no better test of a religion than that of your Great Master, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and I am glad

to turn to the practical side of our faith that you may see how well it measures up to the best standards of life. Let us sit on yonder bench in the shade of that beautiful tree and rest as we talk. As I have already told you, Zoroastrianism emphasizes the fact that life is a constant struggle with evil and that the ultimate purpose of it all must be spiritual. Therefore our morality is active and practical, not contemplative, like that of the Hindus. On this account we have a strong code of ethics in which truthfulness takes the highest place. Herodotus even bore witness to our hatred of lies. I believe it is due to this sacred regard for truth in the making of contracts and agreements that largely accounts for the splendid business prosperity of the Parsees. We also have the highest regard for justice, and are careful to practice it. Everywhere we are well known for our industry and consequent prosperity. Impurity and offenses having to do with sex relations are most severely punished by the Parsees, and therefore you seldom hear of domestic ruptures among our people such as, I fear, are very common in America. Moreover, our moral teachings extend to the care and proper treatment of the body. There is no asceticism in Parseeism. The Avesta commands neither fasting nor flagellation. On the other hand, we do emphasize the maintenance of sound physical health. Our Catechism makes this a religious duty in these words: "The mind remains sound and active when the

body is kept in a sound state, and when the mind is sound and active our soul is better able to perform righteous actions. By performing these righteous deeds we please Ahura Madza." Parsee morality is likewise social in its expression. You have seen that the laws of the Avesta, like those of your Old Testament, are based upon considerations not only of the spiritual but even of the physical welfare of the community. Many of our religious rites and customs, for example, are founded upon the principles of sanitation. The Towers of Silence are as much sanitary as sacred. So we enforce as a command of religion cleanliness in our homes and in our streets. We also recognize our obligation to the poor and unfortunate. It may surprise you to know that right here in Bombay we maintain nearly fifty charitable institutions. Sir Jamsejee Jeejeeboy in his day had the reputation of being the largest giver to schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions in the world, and this form of good will was exercised not only toward the unfortunate of our own people but also to those of other nations and religions. The Parsees are said to contribute more to charity in proportion to their numbers than any other religious sect.

Christian: Surely, such philanthropy is a splendid evidence of the genuineness of your religion. But why is it that I have never heard of a Parsee mission to other peoples? Since the teachings of the Avesta result in such real helpfulness, it would

seem that you ought to organize a propaganda to reach especially the needy of the world.

Parsee: We have a distinct dislike as a people for making converts. We prefer that the influence of our faith should work quietly and naturally upon those with whom we mingle. Nor do we wish to be worked upon by missionaries of other religions. We have resisted the efforts of the Hindus and we have had one or two distasteful contacts with the more energetic Christian missionaries. Let me hasten to say, however, that the Parsees recognize the great contributions made by the Christian religion toward the uplift of humanity, and our own debt to the English people for much of our modern progress.

Christian: Speaking of the progress of the Parsees, I should like to hear about your modern educational system.

Parsee: About 1850 we started schools for boys and girls, and since that date education has made very rapid progress among our people. Besides a number of schools directly under the control of the Parsees, we also send many of our children to the government and private schools of Bombay. Many Parsees are taking high places not only in business but in the realms of politics, science, and education. We boast the smallest proportion of illiterates among all the various classes of peoples residing in this city. Nor is this movement one-sided, since we make splendid provisions for the education of the female sex.

A GROUP OF PARSEE SCHOOL BOYS

A GROUP OF PARSEE SCHOOL GIRLS

Upon the whole, I think we are farther advanced than Western peoples in our general attitude toward women. Our theology at this point is better. We hold neither that woman is the temptress nor even the inferior of man. In line with this view of the equality of the sexes, every opportunity has been afforded Parsee girls and women for larger development, and they have not been slow in seeking this higher education. Moreover, they have acquitted themselves well, and many of them have graduated with high honors. Out of this modern educational movement too have come a number of reforms that have been of great benefit to our people. One of the first fruits was a successful effort to purge our religion of the degrading elements of Hinduism. Another was the beginning of a closer study of our own religion and the publication of books, magazines, and pamphlets setting forth our doctrines that the outside world might understand the principles and practices of our faith. In 1859 the Parsees of Bombay made an organized attempt to reach their fellow Zoroastrians in Persia and succeeded in helping to relieve them from the burden of numerous oppressive laws. One of the best results of the educational movement, however, was the raising of the marriage age, and the strengthening of rules and restrictions governing offenses against this relation. Our priests are now becoming better educated and during the past few years conferences looking toward the

further purification of Parseeism and the inauguration of other reforms have been held annually in Bombay. So you see we are striving to realize the ideals of Zoroaster and to continue the great struggle toward perfection in individual, social, and political life. Well, it is now quite past the noon hour and I must keep an engagement at two o'clock. So I will have to leave you for to-day. To-morrow, if you wish, I will meet you again at your hotel, and shall be glad to show you more of our city.

Christian: Let me thank you for this discussion. It has given me a new insight into your religion and a new sense of the brotherhood of all men. Good-by, then, until to-morrow.

Parsee: I am glad you feel as you do about our conversation this morning. Some day before you leave I wish you might talk to me in this same informal way about the Christian religion. I will see you again at ten o'clock in the morning. Farewell.

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CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

When ye pray say "Our Father."—*Jesus Christ.*

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In our study of the religions treated in the preceding chapters we have been led to make some comparisons of these faiths with each other and with Christianity. Inasmuch as our own faith has more than twice the number of followers represented by any other single world religion, and since considerably more than half of the globe is under the control of Christian governments and eighty-five per cent of the inhabitable land is actually occupied by Christians, it is fitting that as we come to the close of our discussion, a little space should be devoted to a consideration of the reasons for such numerical superiority. We view, then, the world religious situation first of all from the standpoint of statistics,[1] and find that the world population in 1896 was 1,487,900,000 and in 1916, 1,628,890,000. With this increase in the number of the earth's inhabitants nearly all the great religions showed gains in the number of followers with the exception of Buddhism, which lost more than 9,000,000. The population of the globe increased during the twenty years about .094 per cent, and in this period Confucianism and Taoism practically stood still; Hinduism

[1] Statistics from World Almanacs for 1896 and 1916.

gained scarcely in the same proportion as the world population, while Christianity grew by more than eighteen per cent, and Mohammedanism by over twenty-five per cent. Thus, while such an analysis shows that Islam has been growing faster during recent years than Christianity, a survey of the field as a whole from the standpoint of numbers reveals a decided victory for theism and the interpretation of the universe in personal terms as against the atheistic explanation of Buddhism. We sum up the numerical strength of these above faiths to-day as follows: Christianity, 564,510,000; Confucianism and Taoism, 300,830,000; Hinduism, 210,540,000; Mohammedanism, 221,825,000; Buddhism, 138,031,000. There are also about 158,270,000 persons who could be classified as Animists, and approximately 100,000 Parsees.

Leaving now the consideration of the strength of the Christian faith as manifested in numerical superiority, we seek to find the secret of its vital power over the lives of men. Whatever theory we may adopt to account for the varieties of religious systems, a comparison of Christianity with non-Christian sects strikingly reveals its true character and worth in those elements of other religions that it embodies or rejects. Christianity takes up and gives the strongest emphasis to the animistic sense of an unseen world, but strenuously opposes primitive superstitions and fanaticism even when presented under the guise of modern cults; it carries the Taoist notion of an orderly

universe to larger definiteness and insists that the world is one of law; it accepts and indorses the formal ethics of Confucius but presses the demands of the moral life deeper—into the realm of desires and motives. The Christian religion does not lose itself in the pantheism of Hinduism, but insists on the nearness of God, while at the same time preserving his vital independence; it faces the problem of evil as does Buddhism, but its remedy is not denial and negation. Instead it recommends that we face the woes of life and struggle through to a real spiritual conquest. With just as much vigor as the Moslems, Christians emphasize the unity of God, but they also proclaim the good news of his Fatherly nature. While Christianity is at one with Parseeism in many doctrines, its distinctive preeminence is to be found in its fundamental doctrine of Christ as found in the Gospels and hence it recognizes the larger obligation of spreading the glad tidings throughout the whole world, a splendid criterion by which to judge the depth and vitality of professed beliefs.

And what of our practical test? How does Christianity work out in life? What is its contribution to the welfare of the race? From the individual standpoint its great apologetic is the transformed life. Since the conversion of Saint Paul history has been constantly repeating itself in like far-reaching changes wrought by the power of the gospel in the hearts of men. This strange

renewal of life we may not be able clearly to analyze, but its fruits in terms of better conduct and higher individual efficiency and service to the world we know how to value. Such real transformations are so numerous as persistently to be expected wherever Christianity is preached and taught. This cannot be said for any other of the world's religions. In the wider ranges of life also we find the fruits of the Christian faith. The home in its most highly developed form as a potent influence for the enlargement and betterment of life, in spite of the disintegrating elements at work upon the institution in these modern days, is a Christian product. Likewise the highest forms of literature, art, and music have for their inspiration and their themes subjects vitally connected with the Christian faith. The cause of education too is constantly being furthered and the best results attained in Christian lands. And what can be said of governments and the steady forward march of democracy, especially in English-speaking countries? Is not progress at this point due to the great principles laid down in both the Old and the New Testament, which the Christian conscience cannot forget?

If anyone should object that such standards of life have merely relative validity, we will take the vote not among Occidentals but among Orientals. Here we find in the imitation of English-speaking manners and customs, in the zeal for modern education, in religious and social reform movements,

that old ideals set up under the influence of non-Christian religions are being forsaken for those of the Western world, and that even now the leaders of these faiths are striving with but small success to call the people back to their ancient views and customs. Thus these great objectives are taking on an absolute character for the human race as they are found to satisfy the deeper instincts of men, and form a reliable test by which we may measure the worth of various religious teachings.

But deeper still we find a unique combination of permanence and change in the historical unfoldment of the Christian religion. It has all the characteristics of developing life, for its great essential principles have remained the same throughout the centuries, but in every era there has been some new interpretation of its old truths, some new application of its ancient teachings, some new demand upon the consciences of men. For example, in our day gospel teachings are receiving a larger interpretation than ever before in their bearing upon the collective life of humanity, though the obligation for social justice always has been inherent in New Testament doctrine. There is also a strange power of self-renewal characterizing the progress of Christianity. This is conspicuously illustrated in the reformations of Luther and Wesley. Here also we may find the deeper meaning of Europe's horrible conflict. Perhaps if we could forget for a moment the awful physical spectacle with its terrible carnage, we

might see that a mighty spiritual struggle is going on that shall mark a new epoch for faith.

Where, then, can we find the key to this unique vitality and power? We do not need to seek far, for the answer is comprehended in one word,—Christ. We stake everything on him. In his life taken in the fullest and largest sense is the whole meaning of our faith. There is a popular idea sometimes expressed that other religions make as high claims for their great teachers as does Christianity. Such a view is entirely erroneous. None of the world's great religions have ever contended that their founders possessed unique natures. Here and there, of course, semiobscure, misguided fanatics have made Christlike claims for themselves, but these persons have never attained to any influence or standing among the great of earth. Christ stands alone. From the ethical standpoint his teachings are the best the world has ever heard, for they deal not only with outward expression but with inner life. It has been claimed that many of his sayings show the influence of Buddhism, but a comparison of the best of Buddha with the best of Jesus, while revealing numerous similarities, shows also the finer development and larger comprehensivenesss of Christ. Jesus Christ not only taught, but he actually realized these teachings in his own life, so that to this day no one has convinced him of sin. Certainly nowhere else in history do we find another instance of living moral perfection. His death also was

full of meaning, and taken in connection with the words and acts of his life, constitutes a revelation of the nature of God such as the world had never before seen. Jesus showed the real hideousness of sin and taught us to say, "Our Father," thus opening up to our vision a new vista with vast reaches of infinite love. The historical Christ is even more to us than all this, for he is the eternal humanity of God himself revealed in time, and therefore he has lifted the whole religious problem to the plane of personal relationship where only it can be understood and solved. It is this view that constitutes the key to the meaning of life. The personal interpretation alone can bring intellectual peace. A philosophy built on any other conception drives straight to wreck and ruin in its theory of knowledge, in its metaphysics, and finally in the realm of practical ethics. Only a religion of personal relationships can produce motives large and strong enough to realize moral ideals. Such a religion, and only such, can steel the will for a real struggle with sin and the evils of life, and inspire our individual and collective life with the real swing of spiritual conquest.

It is this Christ, with this large revelation of the intimate personal meaning of God's relationship to men, that humanity can never forget. No wonder we divide history into two great divisions called "before Christ" and "after Christ." Moreover, the vitality of Christ is still with us, molding and shaping the race with the passage of time into

the ideal in the mind of God. If all this is anthropomorphism, let us have more of it, for it works as no other religion on earth has ever worked. The great distinction between the Oriental faiths which we have been studying and Christianity lies right here. In Christ the Christian faith possesses a power that brings results in terms of the highest conceptions of which humanity is capable, while non-Christian religions, in spite of their lofty ideals and purposes, falter and largely fail in the realm of actual life.

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